THE WEAPONIZED CROWD: VIOLENT DISSIDENT IRISH REPUBLICANS
EXPLOITATION OF SOCIAL IDENTITY WITHIN
ONLINE COMMUNITIES

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by

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The meaning and implications of insurrections has been profoundly changed by the proliferation of Web 2.0 and now Web 3.0 in addition to the advent of big data analysis. Through these platforms, the "unorganized militia" randomly participating in the war has increased. Online activists and social movements continue to challenge us to think about what cyberspace is and how it can be used. The heyday of the Provisional IRA pre-dated the advent of the Internet; however there is a vibrant Irish Republican community online. The Social Movement Network of the IRA uses the Internet as one of the only places that this network can exist and prosper with limited fear of reprisal. Websites, discussion forums, and social network platforms, as well as other information communication technologies, are used by supporters of the Violent Dissident Republican (VDR) movement in order to disseminate content that supports the ideals and goals of the dissidents. Growing levels of support are evident online via social networking sites. This research seeks to provide an appreciation and analysis of the online strategies, tactics, and techniques used by dissident Irish Republicans. This type of propaganda analysis is essential to developing an effective understanding of who these un-rostered volunteers are as well as how they are acquired. This understanding will enable Commanders at all levels to more effectively leverage and operate in this emerging battlespace.

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any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing
statement.)

ABSTRACT

THE WEAPONIZED CROWD: VIOLENT DISSIDENT IRISH REPUBLICANS EXPLOITATION OF SOCIAL IDENTITY WITHIN ONLINE COMMUNITIES, by Major Patrick B. Taylor, 99 pages.

The meaning and implications of insurrections has been profoundly changed by the proliferation of Web 2.0 and now Web 3.0 in addition to the advent of big data analysis. Through these platforms, the "unorganized militia" randomly participating in the war has increased. Online activists and social movements continue to challenge us to think about what cyberspace is and how it can be used. The heyday of the Provisional IRA pre-dated the advent of the Internet; however there is a vibrant Irish Republican community online. The Social Movement Network of the IRA uses the Internet as one of the only places that this network can exist and prosper with limited fear of reprisal. Websites, discussion forums, and social network platforms, as well as other information communication technologies, are used by supporters of the Violent Dissident Republican (VDR) movement in order to disseminate content that supports the ideals and goals of the dissidents. Growing levels of support are evident online via social networking sites. This research seeks to provide an appreciation and analysis of the online strategies, tactics, and techniques used by dissident Irish Republicans. This type of propaganda analysis is essential to developing an effective understanding of who these un-rostered volunteers are as well as how they are acquired. This understanding will enable Commanders at all levels to more effectively leverage and operate in this emerging battlespace.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS

32 CSM	County Sovereignty Movement
CBG	Common Bond Groups
CIG	Common Identiy Groups
IRA	Irish Republican Army
ODT	Optimal Distinctiveness Theory
PDT	Perceived Deprivation Theory
PIRA	Provisional Irish Republican Army
RIRA	Real Irish Republican Army
RNU	Republican National Union Network
RSF	Republican Sinn Fein
SCAME	Source Content Audience Message Effect
SMN	Social Movement Network
SMO	Social Movement Organiation
VDR	Violent Dissindent Republican

ILLUSTRATIONS

TABLES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

— United Nations,
Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948

Without the scientific research of modern psychology and sociology there would be no propaganda, or rather we still would be in the primitive stages of propaganda that existed in the time of Pericles or Augustus.

—Jacques Ellul,
Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes

All conflict, of any kind, begins with an idea. That grievance, problem, or political machination might be conquest, liberation, spreading one's ideology, or economic interest. That idea becomes the central unifying purpose for all other actions which take place during the ensuing conflict phases. In the timeless monograph *On War*, Karl Von Clausewitz express that the nature of any conflict is at its very core political, "War is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means."[1] This encapsulates in a single sentence the goal of any modality of conflict, that the object of war is some political agenda driven by one intractable belief: "things must change."

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[1] Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes*, trans. Konrad Kellen and Jean Lerner (New York: Vintage Books, 1973). For another perspective see Karl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ. Princeton University Press. 1976), 731. "Is war not just another expression of their [Govt. and people] thoughts, another form of speech and writing?"

This vital belief in the need for change forces one group into direct conflict with another through a variety of means, modes, and localities spanning the spectrum from protest and non-violent resistance, to armed insurrections. G.L. Lamborn in his book *The People in Arms*, states: "The decisive factor in nearly all successful anti-colonial movements, and the insurgencies which some of those movements, spawned, was the ability of a native leadership to promote an idea, and to organize the ordinary people of hamlets, then villages, then whole districts behind that idea."[2]

This coming together of like-minded individuals around a shared grievance is essential to the generation of any type of momentum for social change. Societies are characterized by both cultural and social structures. Culture establishes goals for people in society while social structure provides (or fails to provide) the means for people to achieve these goals. In a well-integrated society, people use accepted means to achieve the goals society establishes. When the means are out of balance with the goals, structural strain is introduced and deviant behavior is likely to occur. The imbalance between cultural goals and structurally available means results in the formation of a grievance. This perceived deprivation can be used to motivate an individual to participate in and support various forms of instability and resistance movements.

The nature of these movements can be broken into two broad categories. According to G. L. Lamborn, "These two categories are those movements that seek to transform society and destroy the current existing norms and structures in favor of a 'progressive' modern age and the second movement type seeks to block change and

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[2] G. L. Lamborn, *The People in Arms: A Practitioner's Guide to Understanding Insurgency and Dealing with It Effectively,* Afghanistan-Pakistan Training Group, 2009.

preserve the old traditional way things were and should be."[3] In general, a nationalistic movement tends to be inclusive, progressive, and transformational. A prime example of this type of movement is the FARC of Columbia. However, those organized around tribal, ethnic or religious lines tend to be preservationist, for example Therik-E-Taliban Pakistan.

Understanding how grievance formation is driven by an inability to achieve success as defined by societal norms, is imperative when trying to understand how social movements form. From this elemental set of ideas, a master narrative begins to emerge. In a recent article, L. Todd Wood[4] stated "The goal is to control the narrative of a conflict in order to control the outcome. Today, the internet and instantaneous professional quality video, information operatives have the capability to shape how the world sees a war or aggressive actions by one side."[5]

This master narrative, which is constructed to elicit support for a chosen social identity, lays the groundwork for clear In-groups and Out-groups. The process of In-grouping and Out-grouping is essential for the establishment of effective frames. "Like a picture frame, an issue frame marks off some part of the world. Like a building frame, it holds things together. It provides coherence to an array of symbols, images, and arguments, linking them through an underlying organizing idea that suggests what is

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[3] Ibid.

[4] L. Todd Wood is a USAF Special Operations veteran and regular contributor to FOX News, Zero hedge, and others on financial and security related topics.

[5] Todd L. Wood, "The New War of the 21st Century Will Kill You Softly with Information," *Western Journalism*, 7 January 2015, accessed 15 January 2015, http://www.westernjournalism.com/new-war-21st-century-will-kill-softly-information/.

essential - what consequences and values are at stake."[6] Providing an enemy (someone to blame) enables a movement to model and alter the social identity of those within it. This social identification process, according to Alexander Haslam, Stephen Reicher and Michael Platow[7] "constitutes the psychological process that makes group behavior possible."[8] These movements and their thought leaders are critical in defining the shared meaning of group boundaries and how inclusive or exclusive that shared meaning is in regards to external actors and the society the movement operates.[9]

These values and beliefs are transmitted through a variety of means, but they become the bedrock around which collective identity is developed and mobilized for effect. The ability to develop and transmit target messages to large diverse groups of members allows a movement to transform aspirations into a political platform. Social media connects that agenda to a particular definition of "their" developed group identity. This ability to provide a clear and robustly supported frame becomes the point at which

[6] Charlotte Ryan and William A. Gamson, "The Art of Reframing Political Debates," *Contexts* 5, no. 1 (2006): 14.

[7] Alexander S. Haslam, Stephen D. Reicher, and Michael J. Platow are renowned social psychologists. Their work together focuses on the role of perceived shared identity as a basis for mutual influence between leaders and followers. It argues that leaders' success hinges on their ability to create, represent, advance and embed a social identity that is shared with those they seek to motivate and inspire. See also A. S. Haslam, S. D. Reicher, and M. J. Platow, *The New Psychology of Leadership: Identity, Influence and Power* (London: Psychology Press, 2011).

[8] Andrea K. Grove, "Leadership, Framing, and Social Identity: An Empirical Application to the Iranian Case" (Paper prepared for Annual Meeting of the International Society of Political Psychology, Istanbul, Turkey, July 2011).

[9] Ibid. Grove would define this as leadership framing. This process is essential for the acceptance of the nature of certain movements. For example the IRA leadership frame internal of organized resistance to an occupying force is essential to the Irish Republican narrative.

rhetoric, audience, and context interact to ensure that followers are taught what is best for them by the movement. Group identity is exploited chiefly to accomplish two things. The first is to bring new members into the movement and secondly, motivate current members to act to achieve the goals of the movement.

The first factor relies on the fact that joining a group or faction makes an individual unique and distinct form from other people, in essence, offering a new social identity. This phenomenon is explained in Brewer's Optimal Distinctness Theory. This theory was developed by Dr. Marilynn B. Brewer[10] in 1991. Optimal Distinctiveness is a Socio-psychological theory seeking to understand "In-group and Out-group" differences. It asserts that individuals desire to attain an optimal balance of inclusion and distinctiveness within and between social groups and situations.[11]

The second key factor, mobilizing the support to act on behalf of the movements, is accomplished through exploiting perceived deprivation. Perceived Deprivation Theory (PDT)[12] explains this phenomenon. "Deprivations have to be put into a common frame of

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[10] Dr. Marilynn Brewer is a prominent American social psychologist. She is now professor emeritus of psychology at Ohio State University. She is particularly recognized for her theory of optimal distinctiveness.

[11] M. B. Brewer, "The Social Self: On Being the Same and Different at the Same Time," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 17, no. 5 (1991): 475-82.

[12] Perceived or Relative Deprivation Theory (PDT) offers a simple yet profound insight into intergroup behavior in general, and conflict more specifically. According to the theory, we feel deprived when we compare ourselves to others whom we perceive as better off. It is important to note that these perceptions do not always correspond to objective circumstances. Rather, relative deprivation is based on subjective social comparisons, which produce very real perceptions of inequity and feelings of discontent. Defense and Research Development Canada, "The Psychology of Violent Conflict in Failing States," accessed 20 December 2014, http://www.dtic.mil/get-tr-doc/pdf?AD=ADA543184#page57.

reference."[13] This concept of a frame is critical; for perceived deprivation to be effective, it must also be contextualized. These contextualized deprivations allow a movement to frame particular issues and the world at large in order to advance their narrative. This allows for collective attribution and social construction, or more plainly a "conscious strategic effort by groups of people to fashion shared understanding of the world and themselves that legitimate and motivate collective actions."[14]

Dissident communities have long relied on these frames coupled with the under-governed conversational spaces (such as religious houses of worship, coffee houses, etc) needed for counter cultural ideas to flourish. An excellent example of this in Western society is that of the Irish Republican Army (IRA). The IRA in Northern Ireland blossomed into one of the largest and arguably most effective guerrilla groups since World War II. The grievances that began its resurrection in Northern Ireland happened initially on two levels: constitutional and parliamentary. In Northern Ireland, a chief foundation of the grievance became centered around important British policy decisions, the civil rights movement, Falls Road curfew, and the interdictions of the internment in August of 1971.[15] Fear, tradition, and the need for protection became key motivators as

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[13] Denton E. Morrison, "Some Notes toward Theory on Relative Deprivation, Social Movements, and Social Change," in *Collective Behavior and Social Movements,* ed. Louis E. Genevie (Itasca, IL: Peacock, 1978), 202-209.

[14] Groves, 4.

[15] Falls Church Curfew also called the Battle of the Falls or the Rape of the Lower Falls) was a British Army operation during 3–5 July 1970 in the Falls district of Belfast, Northern Ireland. The operation began as a search for weapons in the staunchly Irish nationalist district. The Falls Curfew deeply alienated Belfast's Irish nationalist and Catholic population from the British Army and boosted support for the IRA. For more information see Peter Taylor, *Provos The IRA and Sinn Féin* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1997).

well as part of the master narrative of a rapidly reemerging IRA. It is hard to overestimate British policy and its initial benefit to the goals and aspirations of the IRA. This master narrative became the key fixture in recruitment, funding, and the actions of the IRA in the intervening years.

To understand how the social movement network of the IRA moved this highly effective narrative into cyberspace to support and enhance its operations, it is critical to first understand what cyberspace is. Additionally, we must explore how it is related to the holistic information environment, and how these conditions have spawned a new under-governed space to for movements like the IRA to survive and thrive. However, prior to delving into the world of cyberspace, we must first have an appreciation of social movement typology.

A social movement organization tends to be defined by the structures that have come before it. In the case of the IRA, that organizational structure was a military one. This structure was highly organized and centrally controlled. This worked well in an era of regionalized conflict; however we must consider the relationship between modernization and organizational change. "As the amount of resources available to Social Movement Organizations (SMO) increase so does their ability to accomplish their goals."[16] These resources can include time, money, and political freedom, as well as a means of communication. As these resources grow, the development should lead to a more professionalized, formalized, and larger structure.[17]Technology, especially

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[16] Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1999).

[17] Ibid., 45.

communication technology, has greatly influenced the organizational structure of Social

Movement Organizations as well as their tactics. Computer-mediated communication has

expanded the capacity of the IRA and enabled it to connect with other networks of

activists as well. These activists have not only incorporated cyberspace and online

communities into their approaches but have also greatly altered the definitions of

activism, community, collective identity, and political strategy. Online activists and

social movements continue to challenge us to think about what cyberspace is and how it

is used. An example of this is how Web 2.0 has enabled the transition of the IRA from a

Social Movement Organization to a Social Movement Network.

The development of online communities and social networks provides access to

latent political opportunity structures. These structures develop and can exist because the

Internet is under-governed space. Since the advent of the Internet in the mid-1990s, the

Irish Republican Army (IRA), to include associations and affiliates, has leveraged this

new under-governed space to augment and enhance its overall operations.

Now that we have an understanding of social movement typologies, we can begin

to further explore how they are used in the cyberspace domain. In order to understand

how this development occurred, it is imperative to understand the information

environment in relation to cyberspace. This is the sea in which activists and organizers

move and utilize key platforms to support and develop their social movement network.

> According to the Department of Defense Strategy for Operating in Cyberspace
> (DSOC) Cyberspace is a defining feature of modern life. Individuals and
> communities worldwide connect, socialize, and organize themselves in and
> through cyberspace. From 2000 to 2010, global Internet usage increased from 360
> million to over 2 billion people. As Internet usage continues to expand,

cyberspace will become increasingly woven into the fabric of everyday life across the globe.[18]

Cyberspace can be defined as "a global domain within the information environment consisting of the interdependent network of information technology infrastructures, including the internet, telecommunication networks, computer systems and embedded processors and controllers."[19] The Internet, by its very nature, is defined by a culture of freedom, openness, and access. Web 2.0[20] has greatly enhanced this culture and spawned its own social movement in order to promote freedom to communicate by all users. The freedom to communicate, and conversely the lack thereof, has coalesced into its own master narrative and social movement.

Paul Graham identifies two main tenets in the narrative of Web 2.0. These tenets are "democracy" and "don't maltreat users."[21] A physical example of his assertions is Wikipedia. Wikipedia is an excellent example of the type of quality content contributed by users to the overall web community. Wikipedia, co-founder Jimmy Wales, a supporter of the "free internet" emphasizes the concept of building community by empowering

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[18] Department of Defense, "Department of Defense Strategy for Operating in Cyberspace," July 2011, accessed 12 December 2014, http://www.defense.gov/news/ d20110714cyber.pdf.

[19] Gordon England, *Memorandum: The Definition of Cyberspace* (Washington, DC: Office of the Deputy Secretary of Defense, 12 May 2008).

[20] Web 2.0 describes World Wide Web sites that emphasize user-generated content, usability, and interoperability. The term was popularized by Tim O'Reilly and Dale Dougherty at the O'Reilly Media Web 2.0 Conference in late 2004, though it was first coined by Darcy DiNucci in 1999.

[21] P. Graham, "Web 2.0," November 2005, accessed 2 January 2015, http://www.paulgraham.com/web20.html.

users to participate in development and implementation, or pro-summation of Internet content.

The power of Web 2.0 users has become so great that *Time* magazine chose them for its 2006 person of the year, "You, the millions of individuals who are producing and consuming content daily on such sites as YouTube, MySpace, and so forth." *Time* characterizes this dramatic change in two words: "community and collaboration," by "seizing the reins of global media," of a "massive social experiment."[22] This unprecedented level of interaction and interconnectedness has given rise to a new community of online activists who are redefining the scope of activism.

According to Sandor Vegh,[23] online activism can be defined as "A politically motivated movement relying on the Internet."[24] Activists now take full advantage of the technologies, platforms, and techniques offered by cyberspace to achieve, support, or enhance their traditional goals. Online activism can be broken down into two broad categories: those used to enhance traditional activities such as recruiting and fund-raising, and those activities which are only possible online such as virtual protests and sit-ins, or attacking an adversarial website. Online activism in dominated by proactive actions to

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[22] *Time Magazine*, May 2007. Time's extensive use of two-word catch phrases also provides an interesting study in the development of key theme presented to develop a working narrative within the context of the story.

[23] Sandor Vegh, "Classifying Forms of Online Activism: The Case of Cyber Protests against the World Bank." Vegh is a contributor to the book *Cyberactivism*. His work in developing a typology by which to analyze online activism was a key overall component of the book by Martha McCaughey and Michael D. Ayers, *Cyberactivism: Online Activism in Theory and Practice*.

[24] Martha McCaughey and Michael D. Ayers, *Cyberactivism: Online Activism in Theory and Practice* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2003), 71.

achieve a goal or reactive actions against the controls and the systems that implement them.

To understand the forms, impacts, and goals of Internet activism, the broad categories can be broken down further into three forms. According to Michael D. Ayers, in his book *Cyberactivism: Online Activism Theory and Practice*, these three forms are: "Awareness/advocacy, organization/mobilization and action/reaction."[25] Cyberspace connects and enhances communication ideas, reinforces sentiment, and creates new communities. Few movements have been as successful in long-term recruitment and support based development than the Irish Republican Army (IRA) network. The psychological techniques used by this movement provide insight into how to effectively leverage this new domain from a practitioner's perspective. By studying from a user's level, we can visualize how the sociopolitical, physical, and information environments interact to establish the developmental conditions for the formation of social identities, with their own collective memories, successes, and wounds. Another important aspect is how these identities leverage those elements to form nascent movements, which develop and evolve from Social Movement Networks to Social Movement Organizations and in some cases move fluidly between the two structures. We must then examine how movements gain momentum through mobilization structures like Web 2.0. Finally we must evaluate how Web 2.0 provides delivery platforms for the influence campaign.

We can develop this insight by evaluating statements, posts, infographics, and other text conversations to analyze narrative and argument-phasing construction and appeal using the Source Content Audience Method Effect (SCAME) analysis method.

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[25] Ibid., 72.

This propaganda analysis method will allow a systemic and uniform approach to identify, catalogue, and trace the techniques and theories, such as Optimal Distinctiveness Theory and Perceived Depravation Theory, that are employed when developing the propaganda products. As a result, these analyzed products will form the base to assess and develop a theoretical linkage and flow, which leads to product design and dissemination.

<u>Primary Research Question</u>

How does the IRA exploit group identity within online social communities through the use of In-grouping and Out-grouping techniques to generate ground-swell for recruitment, fund generation, and propaganda operations?

<u>Secondary Research Questions</u>

1. Is collective Identity possible over the internet?

2. What do online communities look like?

3. Do groups need in-flesh contact to develop *true* Group Identity?

4. Can group ID be exploited using Optimal Distinctiveness Theory and Perceived Depravation Theory?

<u>Conclusion</u>

Activists have not only incorporated cyberspace and online communities into their approaches but have also greatly altered the definitions of activism, community, collective identity, and political strategy. Online activists and social movements continue to challenge us to think about what cyberspace is and how it can be used. The heyday of the Provisional IRA pre-dated the advent of the Internet; however there is a vibrant Irish Republican community online.

The Social Movement Network of the IRA uses the Internet as one of the only places that this network can exist and prosper with limited fear of reprisal. Websites, discussion forums, and social network platforms as well as other information communication technologies, are used by supporters of the Violent Dissident Republican (VDR) movement in order to disseminate content that supports the ideals and goals of the dissidents. Growing levels of support are evident online via social networking sites which are heavily populated by teens and young adults who were born after the Good Friday Agreement.[26] An appreciation of the online strategies, tactics, and techniques used by dissident Irish Republicans, is essential to developing effective dissenting points of views and counter narratives.

According to Wei Jincheng:'s "Information War: A New Form of People's War:"

Political mobilization for war must rely on information technology to become effective, for example by generating and distributing political mobilization software via the Internet, sending patriotic e-mail messages, and setting up databases for traditional education. This way, modern technical media can be fully utilized and the openness and diffusion effect of the Internet can be expanded, to help political mobilization exert its subtle influence.[27]

In a broader sense, the meaning and implications of insurrections has been profoundly changed by the proliferation of Web 2.0 and now Web 3.0 and the advent of big data analysis. Through these platforms, the "unorganized militia" randomly participating in the war has increased. Understanding who these un-rostered volunteers

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[26] Good Friday Agreement: an agreement reached in 1998 on Good Friday (the first day of the Christian Easter holiday) between the political parties of Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic to end 30 years of violence between Catholic and Protestant groups. The people of Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic were then asked to vote on the agreement, and accepted it by a large majority.

[27] Wei Jincheng, "Information War: A New Form of People's War," accessed 23 February 2015, http://www.fas.org/irp/world/china/docs/iw_wei.htm.

are as well as how they are acquired will enable Commanders at all levels to more effectively leverage this emerging domain.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

> Don't use words too big for the subject. Don't say infinitely when you mean very; otherwise you'll have no word left when you want to talk about something really infinite.
>
> — C .S. Lewis,
> *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis*

> Meanwhile, the poor Babel fish, by effectively removing all barriers to communication between different races and cultures, has caused more and bloodier wars than anything else in the history of creation.
>
> — Douglas Adams,
> *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*

This literature review will discuss the Psychological and Sociological Theories and structures that contribute to the development and organization of Social Movement Networks (SMN) and how these networks leverage these theories using Web 2.0. The Irish Violent Dissident Republican (VDR) is a social movement network defined by disparate but ideological linked nodal groups who support and advance Irish Republican narrative. The VDR SMN is a vehicle to understand how Web 2.0 technology has enhanced the ability of this SMN to stay relevant and connected despite the Good Friday Agreement of 1996, and the ensuing disarmament putting an end to the hierarchical Social Movement Organization (SMO) that was the Provisional IRA.

This review will explore the existing literature in thematic fashion. First, it will look at Influence Theory and how it enables formation. From there, we will discuss group dynamic in context of type, purpose, and finally looking at moving toward collective action. The next significant theme we will look at is Social Movement Organizations (SMO) or Social Movement Networks (SMN) as structures for collective action. We will

explore the nature and phases of social movements and how Web 2.0 provides a new and fertile environment of the survival and continued advancement of social movements. Finally, we will deal with the IRA and its history. It will seek to provide background to set the stage of the culmination of the Provisional IRA in 1996 and 1997, the end of the armed struggle. This will lead into how this apex has led to a transformation in the nature of the Irish Republican Army into Violent Dissident Republican (VDR) organizations and how the proliferation of the Internet and Web 2.0 platforms has played a prominent role in their ability to remain a viable threat to the peace process.

To frame the existing literature, I propose that the grasp of the theoretical basis of collective action can aid the military endusers in developing a picture of the adversary narrative and how once that narrative is built, Web 2.0 platforms and spaces become imperative to its propagation and survival. This analysis will aid the Commander in the understanding and visualization of his environment. When a Commander understands his environment and the narrative of his adversary, he can better describe and direct the effects of his weapons systems, both lethal and non-lethal, to effectively shape the battlefield into his desired end state.

<u>Influence Theory</u>

Social Psychology attempts to study individual-to-individual interaction, individual-to-group interaction, and group-to-group interaction. Major divisions within this field include social influence, group dynamics, and interpersonal relations.[28] These topics set the foundation for any sort of influence operations. Two motives compose

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[28] Wikipedia the Free Encyclopedia, "Social Psychology," accessed 5 January 2015, http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_psychology.

social influence: normative and informational influence. Normative influence describes

how people conform to be socially accepted. For example, peer pressure is a form of

normative influence.[29] Reciprocation is another. Robert Cialdini describes reciprocation,

or that feeling that one should try to repay what another has done for him, in his book

Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion. Even when a person would not normally be

inclined to act, reciprocity creates an obligation for repayment of what was provided.[30]

Information influence describes how people will seek information to create a correct or

acceptable response. Cialdini explains this as he principle of social proof. When one is

uncertain about how to act in a scenario, the normal response is to see how others

act.[31] This intense desire for acceptance explains why and how groups exert social

influence and control over their members.[32] Group formation is a human survival

instinct. Social instinct has made humanity the dominate predators on the planet, through

their desire to act as a collective.

Rules of Social Influence

Social identity groups both help to develop and define our social networks. Our

networks guide our actions and help to shape values, attitudes, and beliefs. Nicholas

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[29] Cialdini and his associates have found that information programs that emphasize injunctive normative influences (what one ought to do) are more influential than those that use descriptive norms. See Robert B. Cialdini et al., "Managing Social Norms for Persuasive Impact," *Social Influence* 1, no. 1 (2006): 4-5.

[30] Robert B. Cialdini, *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion* (New York: Harper Collins, 2007), 13.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid., 139-140.

Christakis and James Fowler, in their book *Connected* describe five rules that explore and

explain the power of interconnection and relationships.[33] However, we will only discuss

the four most applicable to our purposes.

> Rule 1: We shape our network. Our natural tendency is to associate with people who are like us. This is homophily, or love of being alike. The inclusion or exclusion of people from our networks is often by choice, but sometimes circumstances such as geography and other societal factor help to determine with whom we connect.[34]

> Rule 2: Our network shapes us. 'The number of friends and connections within our network has a significant influence on how we see the world.'[35] Christakis and Fowler argue, 'Having an extra friend may create all kinds of benefits for your health, even if this other person doesn't actually do anything in particular for you.'[36] The networks we belong to provide us meaning and constrain our behavior more than we realize.[37]

> Rule 3: Our friends affect us. The shape of our networks is not the only thing that matters. Information and resources that flow across connections matter as well. For example, advice, anger, and joy powered by the influence of friends can alter our behavior and attitudes. Christakis and Fowler argue that we often mimic and influence those around us. For instance, they found that students performed better with roommates who were studious.[38]

> Rule 4: Our friends 'friends' friends affect us. Christakis and Fowler also studied the effect of extended networks. An example of extended network behavior is the effect overweight friends on have on each other. An obese person 'was more likely to have friends, friends of friends, and friends of friends of friends who

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[33] Jason Brown, "Improving Nonlethal Targeting: A Social Network Analysis Method for Military Planners" (Master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterrey, 2012), 13-14.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Nicholas A. Christakis and James H. Fowler, *Connected: The Surprising Power of Our Social Networks and How They Shape Our Lives* (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 2009), 17.

[37] Ibid., 20.

[38] Ibid., 22.

were obese than would be expected due to chance alone.'[39] These working rules provide an exploration and explanation of how groups interact both internally and externally. This interaction is referred to as group dynamics.

Group Dynamics

"Group dynamics study the roles, relationships, norms, and interaction of individuals within a group. To a large extent, the social identity of humans depends upon group membership."[40] Imagine for a moment all of the different collectives you are a part of and the uses for each in terms of decision making, support and protection to name a few. Do all of these collectives, pairings, and partnerships constitute a group? The answer is largely, no. A group is a set of individuals whose social integration has led them to think and act as a mass, their entiativity, or the extent to which a collection of people is perceived as a coherent entity.[41]Groups may be broadly divided into two large categories, Common-Bond Groups (CBGs) and Common Identity Groups (CIGs).[42]

Common Bond Groups are exactly as they sound, attachments based on similarities and affinities between members. In Common Identity Groups, connections are based on attachments to a common shared identity within the group. Members of

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[39] Ibid. The premise of three-degrees of influence has been challenged on mathematical and statistical grounds. See Sean F. Everton, *Disrupting Dark Networks* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 247.

[40] Henri Tajfel and John C. Turner, "The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior," in *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, eds. S. Worchel and W. G. Austin (Chicago, IL: Nelson-Hall, 1986), 7-24.

[41] Martha, L. Cottam et al., *Introduction to Political Psychology*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Psychology Press, 2010).

[42] The present research is based on D. A. Prentice, D. T. Miller, and J. R. Lightdale's (1994) distinction between common bond groups (formed by attachment between group members) and common identity groups (formed by attachment to the group as a whole).

CIGs are far more attached to the identity of the group rather than to the members of the group at large. Groups, be they CBGs or CIGs, satisfy a host of psychological needs for the individual such as needs for affiliation (inclusion), intimacy (affection), or power (control).[43] Regardless of the typology or membership, groups ultimately allow an individual to fulfill needs more effectively. Those within a group share a social identity, which influences behavior and perception towards members of the same group and towards other groups. Those in the same group are viewed favorably (In-grouping), and those outside the group (Out-grouping) are given some sort of negative perception.

<div align="center">The Development of Collective Action</div>

In his seminal work, *The Logic of Collective Action*, Mancur Olson discusses the simple fact that "without an interest there is no group."[44] This interest is translated into tangible benefits or goods. Olson identifies two types of common goods: exclusive and inclusive.[45] "With exclusive common goods, the supply is limited. Think of a cartel; each firm wants to increase output (to increase its profits), but if all firms do this, the profits disappear (as the price falls)."[46] The supply of profits is limited, so it is an exclusive good. With inclusive goods, however, supply is not limited. Whether more members are welcome depends on whether the good is exclusive or inclusive. "Firms prefer to have

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[43] Porta and Diani, 70.

[44] Mancur Olson, *Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups,* Rev. ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971).

[45] Mancur Olson, Jac C. Heckelman, and Dennis Coates, *Collective Choice: Essays in Honor of Mancur Olson* (Berlin: Springer, 2003).

[46] Ibid.

few competitors because goods are exclusive; unions prefer to maximize membership

because its goods are inclusive, and having more members spreads the costs around

more."[47] Olson goes on to explain that there are three main types of groups within a

collective action:

> A privileged group (members of this group would gain more from a public
> good than it would cost them to provide it unilaterally); latent groups (any
> member of this group could withhold his contribution to the public good without
> causing a noticeable reduction in its supply); and intermediate groups (if any
> member of this group withholds his contribution, it will cause a noticeable
> decrease in supply of the good, or a noticeable rise in cost to other contributors).[48]

Following his discussion of the purpose and nature of group formation based on

the expectations of rewards or benefit, Olson further attempts to identify cases where a

group will take action on its behalf. Olson identifies the following three levers that make

collective action essential to interest groups. The first one occurs when a behavior or

action is made compulsory. The second lever is seen when social pressure is brought to

bear. This second approach is usually more effective in small groups that are already

bound by a common interest. The last lever happens when the behavior or action is in the

group members' own best interests, and so occurs voluntarily. More specifically, he

argues that in a voluntary situation, while some collective action may take place, the level

is usually distinctly suboptimal.[49] Olson's book provides a logical economic view of the

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[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid.

[49] "Technological advancements have both enriched and complicated the process
of collective action. On one hand, the growing proliferation of blogs, personal,
organization and party websites have opened up spaces for contention and transformed
the repertoire of collective action. This in turn has lowered people's risks and costs of
participation in a movement, and encouraged activism" for more on this see Carol Soon,
"Collective Action "Going Digital": Overcoming Institutional and Micro-Structural

hows and whys of collective action and group formation, but it is inherently oriented toward economic groups or those devoted to gaining, maintaining, and ensuring material wealth.[50]

Dr. Mark Lichbach's *The Rebel's Dilemma* and Ted Gurr's *Why Men Rebel* both deal directly with the issues' of non-economic groups. According to Lichbach, there are four main types of groups: public interest groups, single-issue groups, ideological groups, and government groups.[51] These Citizens' groups are interest groups that fight for causes instead of working for material gain. Citizen groups seek public goods (also called collective goods), which potentially benefit everyone in society, not just members of the group. Instead of material incentives, these groups offer their members a variety of selective incentives.

Dr. Mark Irving Lichbach showed that the anger-grievance-rebellion sequence could be explained within a rational choice framework. Ted Gurr, in his work, *Why Men Rebel* focuses on analyzing three general factors that lead to these actions. The first of these factors is popular discontent (perceived deprivation), along with an analysis of its sources. This perceived deprivation is an essential factor in motivating group members to support the movement's goals. When properly framed, Perceived Deprivation Theory is used to activate or reinforce the group bond system, regardless of the typology of the group.

Constraints through Technology Use," accessed 5 February 2015, http://www.jedem.org/article/view/220/181.

[50] Olson, Heckelman, and Coates.

[51] Mark Irving Lichbach, *The Rebel's Dilemma* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995).

The second of these factors deals with people's justifications or beliefs about the utility of political action. This justification is chiefly provided by two things: collective memory and chosen wound.[52] Volkan Vamik,[53] in a recent paper, focused on the role of chosen traumas and the consequences of reactivating them through political propaganda, including through religious institutions. "When a chosen trauma establishes itself after many decades or centuries following the ancestors' perceived victimization, it becomes a permanent identity marker for the large group."[54] He further explains how this identity can then be manipulated by political—religious leaders and, associated as it is with an entitlement ideology, may itself become a source of continued conflict.[55] These chosen traumas and events become part of the institutional or collective memory of the social identity of a group. Accessing a group's collective memory enables one to select chosen traumas in order to frame present circumstances. An example of this would be using the collective memory of slavery within the African American social identity to encourage resistance to perceived police mistreatment or profiling.

Gurr's final factor leading into the anger-grievance-rebellion sequence is the balance between discontented people's capacity to act—that is, the ways in which they

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[52] Volkan Vamik, **"Chosen Trauma, The Political Ideology of Entitlement and Violence,"** May 2004, accessed 14 February 2015, http://vamikvolkan.com/Chosen-Trauma,-the-Political-Ideology-of-Entitlement-and-Violence.php.

[53] Volkan Vamik is an Emeritus Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia; an Emeritus Training and Supervising Analyst at the Washington Psychoanalytic Institute, Washington, DC.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid.

are organized—and the government's capacity to repress or channel their anger.[56] Both
Gurr and Olson seem to focus on benefits gained by collective action. A chief limitation
of *Why Men Rebel*, according to Gurr himself, is "that it does not discuss in enough detail
where people's beliefs about justice and the good life come from."[57] There is little focus
on the role of social identity; it seems that both Olson and Gurr focus wholly on the
Common Bond Group. Although these bonds are strong, they do not elicit the same
commitment to a group as much as a Common Identity Group.

In the intervening years, there has been a much larger focus on Common Identity
Groups and their formation and characteristics. This focus on Common Identity Groups
has led to a strong cultural shift in social movement studies. The results of economic-
based interest analysis completed by Gurr and Olson support the idea that social
movements have more to do with resource mobilization and incentivizing the participants
than rhetoric. This point of view had virtually eliminated the role that emotions and
collective social identity play in movement development. Alberto Melucci's *Challenging
Codes* and James M. Jasper's *The Art of Moral Protest,* served to bring these factors back
into sharp relief. Melucci focused on the creation of collective identities as the purpose of
social movements, especially the "new social movements." Alberto Melucci writes,
"Collective identity is an interactive and shared definition produced by several interacting
individuals who are concerned with the orientation of their action as well as the field of

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[56] Lichback.

[57] Ted Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 1971).

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opportunities and constraints in which their action takes place."[58] Unsatisfied with the

gap between theories on how collective actions form and how individuals find

motivation, Melucci defines an intermediate process, in which individuals recognize that

they share certain orientations in common and on that basis decide to act together.[59] He

considers collective identity as a process that is negotiated over time with three parts:

cognitive definition, active relationship, and emotional investments. Jasper argued that

movements allow participants a chance to elaborate and articulate their moral principles.

Social identity, Common Identity Groups, and emotions provide new levers with which

to motivate and elicit actions and behaviors.

<u>Social Movement</u>

In their book *Social Movements: an Introduction*, Donatella Della Porta and

Mario Daini maintain, "Social movements are a distinct social process mechanism

through which actors engage in collective action."[60] They state that there are three

realities in any social movement; they are involved in conflictual relations with clearly

identified opponents, they are linked by dense informal networks, and they share a

collective identity. According to Porta and Diani, "These conditions are deeply rooted in

Symbolic Interactionism."[61] "Symbolic Interactionism is a theory that human interaction

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[58] Alberto Melucci, John Keane, and Paul Mier, *Nomads of the Present: Social Movements and Individual Needs in Contemporary Society* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989).

[59] Ibid.

[60] Porta and Diani, 20.

[61] Ibid., 12.

and communication is facilitated by words, gestures, and other symbols that have

acquired conventionalized meanings."[62] There is particular relevance in the meaning an

actor attributes to social structures and events. Kelton Rhoads, of USC's Annenberg

School for Communication and a former Mentor at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare

Center's Psychological Operations Qualification Course, explains the balance of positive

and negative information and how this information has a symbolic value:

> Psychologists have long known of the existence of the 'positivity bias,' which states that humans overwhelmingly expect good things (as opposed to neutral or bad things) to occur. If perceivers construct a world in which primarily positive elements are expected, then negative information becomes perceptually salient as a jolting disconfirmation of those expectations. We also know that people stop to examine disconfirmations to a much higher degree than confirmations. Negative information is often highly informative and thus may be assigned extra weight in the decision-making.[63]

This disposition to evaluate, assimilate, and build frames explains how Symbolic

Interactionism is an essential lens to determine the context of a given event and

incorporate that event into one's own worldview. When traditional norms or information

no longer provide a satisfactory behavior structure, an individual or group is forced to

challenge the conventional order through various forms of non-conformity. Porta and

Diani have stated, "A social movement develops when a feeling of dissatisfaction

spreads, and inflexible institutions are unable to effectively respond."[64] Porta and Diani's

perspective deals holistically with analyzing social movements, as opposed to online

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[62] Dictionary.com, "Symbolic Interactionism," accessed 20 March 2015, http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/symbolicinteractionism.

[63] Kelton Rhoads, "Introduction to Influence," Working Psychology, 1997, accessed 5 January 2015, http://www.workingpsychology.com/definit.html.

[64] Porta and Diani, 13.

communities specifically. Their use of Symbolic Interactionism as a school from which to draw base observations rather than as a singular theory addressing single event interpretations, helps to illuminate possible sub theories and how those theories, such as frame theory, contribute to the overall development and sustainment of a social movement.

Dr. Andrea K Groves in her paper *Leadership Framing and Social Identity,* provides a framework under which the conditions discussed by Olson and Gurr and the emotional role of the participant are joined and explained. Groves' research has focused on social identity and how leaders mobilize that identity through the application of Frame Theory. Frame theory connects "ideologically congruent but structurally unconnected frames" regarding a specific problem set.[65] For instance, strategic framing by leadership or other respected members can greatly affect how recruits are drawn into an organization, how these groups stay together, and what causes them to break apart.[66] Three framing tasks motivate people for behavior change and mobilization, in the case of social movements, these, these tasks are: "a) diagnostic framing for the identification of a problem and assignment of blame, b) prognostic framing to suggest solutions, strategies, and tactics to a problem, and c) motivational framing that serves as a call to arms or rationale for action."[67] Frame analysis is a method of explaining how people perceive the

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[65] David A. Snow et al., "Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation," *American Sociological Review* 51, no. 4 (August 1986): 469, accessed 22 January 2015, http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/2095581?ref=no-x-route:b56a976913e5d08de309ffb7455de593.

[66] Ibid., 467.

[67] See David A. Snow and Robert D. Benford, "Ideology, Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation," *American Sociological*

world around them. Modifying frames through alignment processes is a contributing factor to changes in behavior. Groves' paper on this interaction explores the interplay of how rhetoric, audience, and context interact. Groves further states "Because context affects the particular membership with which we identify at any given time, the tension between the two needs can be exploited by leaders who can manipulate the context, and framing aspects, to make certain identities more relevant."[68] Grove states in her paper, that Brewer's Optimal Distinctiveness Theory (ODT) asserts that certain needs and not group size help to determine which identities become most important to an individual in certain circumstances. ODT is often used during the diagnostic frame and prognostic frames.[69] Groves posits that in this framing effort, how leaders address and contextualize In-groups and Out groups is coupled with Relative Deprivation Theory to explain rhetorical strategies used to mobilize support.

The Internet, Web 2.0 and Collective Action

This cycle of conflict and dissidence often draw the ire of the status quo. However, with advent of the Internet, a global commons was created, similar to the ocean or space. Under this new logic the under-governed space of the Internet allows movements to be connected to new power bases and audiences. Movement members and

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Review 51, no. 4 (August 1986): 464-81, http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/ 2095581?ref=no-x-route:b56a976913e5d08de309ffb7455de5937, as quoted in http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frame_analysis.

[68] Grove.

[69] Diagnostic frame: the movement organization frames what is the problem or what they are commenting on. Prognostic frame: the movement organization frames what is the desirable solution to the problem.

new potential participants are now part of a world that is extended and joined by social

media platforms to establish networks with an ideological focus. Web 2.0, with its focus

on social network technology, has only added to the power and potential of this space for

social movement's survival. However John Kelly, a prominent sociologist and theorist

regarding the internet, characterize the Internet as:

> A kind of "anti-commons" which allows citizens to consume information and
> affiliate with others based on shared values and interests only. Whereas individual
> preferences are held in check by public institutions in the world around us—
> information 'commons' like public parks or the mainstream mass media—in
> which citizens are exposed to a range of viewpoints they would not otherwise
> encounter, the Internet can be less public.[70]

After all this, we must now ask the question: What is social media? Andreas

Kaplan and Michael Haenlein define social media as "a group of Internet-based

applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and

that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content."[71] Web 2.0 refers to the

software platform that gave birth to the technology that we currently understand as social

media. In his works *Tweets and the Streets*, Paolo Gerbaudo, address how the Internet

and Web 2.0 platforms are changing the face of collective action. The thesis of the book

goes against the grain of current theorizing about social media, and more generally,

theoretical work about the information society. He skillfully cites authors like Manuel

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[70] John Kelly, Danyel Fisher, and Marc Smith, "Debate, Division, and Diversity:
Political Discourse Networks in USENET Newsgroups" (Paper prepared for the "Online
Deliberation Conference 2005, Stanford University, 24 May 2005), accessed 19
December 2014, http://www.coi.columbia.edu/pdf/kelly_fisher_smith_ddd.pdf.

[71] Andreas M. Kaplan and Michael Haenlein, "Users of the World, Unite! The
Challenges and Opportunities of Social Media," *Business Horizons* 53, no. 1 (2009): 61.

Castells,[72] in his work on networks, and of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri,[73] in their discussion of multitude and swarms. He seeks to draw a line between those that see the social network domain as an irreducibly complex network that is horizontality-linked, where individuals do not have to be fused into a collective in order to act together.[74] Gerbaudo emphasizes the continuing importance of unity as a requisite condition for collective action. He shows how activists, acting as emotional conduits facilitate a coming together. The connections these conduits develop are based are on common identities, chosen wounds, collective memories and similar formats of action, and all of this is enabled through the use social media platforms.

Gerbaudo directly denies leaderless social media by clearly defining and explaining new forms of soft leadership. He continually emphasizes the centrality of soft leaders and the actual practices of social media campaigning. He focuses on how relatively small groups of highly dedicated and savvy activist or "movement choreographers" can structure participation.[75] Soft leadership and choreography of

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[72] Manuel Castells a Spanish sociologist especially associated with research on the information society, communication and globalization.

[73] Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri in their book *Empire*, have argued that the age of globalization is synonymous with the age of contagion. This is an age in which increased contact with the "Other" shield. The spontaneity of contagious overspills thus has the potential to initiate a revolutionary renewal of global democracy.

[74] Paolo Gerbaudo, *Tweets and the Streets: Social Media and Contemporary Activism* (London: Pluto Press, 2012).

[75] Soft leaders are contemporary digital activists who through the messages, suggestions, and instructions they disseminate, they shape the way in which movements assemble in public space**.**

[75] Gerbaudo.

assembly are two recurring themes in the book that are unique to Gerbaudo perspective.

What do these notions actually mean? The author answers this directly in a recent

interview by stating:

> The term "choreography" is a metaphor to express the idea that at this time, social media enabled protest activity is not as spontaneous and disorganized as it might appear at first sight. By using social media, acting as Facebook admins or popular movement tweeps, contemporary digital activists come to act as choreographers or soft leaders of sorts. Through the messages, suggestions, and instructions they disseminate, they shape the way in which movements assemble in public space." The above metaphor serves to express the fact that social media are not about creating cyberspace opposed to physical reality. To the contrary, they are about shaping our collective action in physical space, the way in which we come together and act together on the streets of Cairo, Madrid, and New York.

We have now discussed relevant literature related to group formation, social

movement evolution, and the advantages provided by Web 2.0 platforms to those

movements. We can now look at the evolution of a specific movement in order to bring

the conceptual discussion above into a concrete example. That concrete example is the

Irish Republican Army or IRA.

The IRA

Historical Background

Any effective discussion of the IRA would be remiss in not starting with Tim Pat

Coogan and his extensive body of work on Northern Ireland. Coogan's *The IRA* is

regarded as a seminal work. He provided an extensive historical and social background

on the long-term history and evolution of the concept that was, is, and will be the IRA.

Coogan examines the IRA's origins, its foreign links, bombing campaigns, hunger

strikes, sectarian violence, and its role in the latest attempts to bring peace to Northern

Ireland. Coogan's work provides an in-depth background to understand the foundational

issues. An in depth appreciation for these issues is vital to comprehending the long evolution of Lichbach's anger-grievance-rebellion cycle. Historically, Ireland seems to constantly be in some phase of this cycle.

Coogan provided an excellent overview of the foundational grievances and how during the 1960s, a civil rights movement began to campaign for more equitable access to political power, social provision, and cultural recognition. It met with resistance and divisions within unionism and as a result, politics spilled onto the streets. In 1969, the London government deployed the British Army in an attempt to restore order. Initially, many in the Catholic population saw the army as their protectors from the Northern Ireland state and a repressive majority population. "For more militant nationalists, however, the introduction of the army restored the traditional republican symbol of oppression-British troops on Irish soil. The campaign for internal reform of the Northern Ireland state was subordinated to the need to remove the British presence and unify with the rest of Ireland."[76] A rejuvenated militant Republicanism, in the form of the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA/IRA) emerged from the increasingly politicized and assertive Catholic minority.

The pattern of violence changed throughout the Troubles. The communal rioting that characterized the late 1960s was gradually, although not completely, replaced by a low intensity conflict. The protagonists were the British state, Republican paramilitaries and loyalist paramilitaries.

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[76] Tim Pat Coogan, *The IRA* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 104.

Violent Dissident Republican Organizations

While Coogan's work provides the essential background, John Horgan's Divided

We Stand highlights the emergence of Violent Dissident Republican (VDR) organizations

and the transition to an interconnected social movement network of ideologically linked,

but disparate groups following the Good Friday Agreement. Horgan's work looks deeply

at the strategy and psychology of these Social Movement Networks. Horgan states the

splits are in the very nature of Irish Republican politics:

> [S]plits have typified the development of Irish Republican militant groups
> is an understatement. Throughout its history, Irish Republicanism has
> continuously split and factionalized. These splits have not just shaped Irish
> Republicanism, they have led to some of the most significant and influential
> events in recent Irish history. A split led to the formation of the two historically
> dominant Irish political parties, Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael.[77]

The strength of the violent dissidents, according to Horgan, is derived from their

adherence to core militant Republican principles. "They draw their strength from the

same messages Gerry Adams and the PIRA leadership preached to their followers prior

to the peace process to which Sinn Féin and the PIRA are now wedded."[78] The essence of

the dissidents is that they are true rejectionists. This point is echoed in analyses of the

dissidents by many in the socio-psychological field whose research has focused on

Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland of today is significantly different from the one in

which the Provisional IRA operated. Under the Good Friday Agreement and the

subsequent St. Andrews Agreement, the main political parties are operating in a devolved

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[77] John Horgan, *Divided We Stand: The Strategy and Psychology of Ireland's Dissident Terrorists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 102.

[78] Ibid.

power-sharing assembly.[79] This power-sharing assembly was seen as a betrayal of Republican principles. Combine this with disappearing physical support structures within the historical Irish Catholic Republican circles, and adaptation must occur. This adaptation can clearly be seen in the transition from a strong social movement organization to a cellular social movement network linked by ideology as well as their seeking refuge in the under-governed space of the Internet. The advent of Web 2.0 provided new ways to link networks together and allows members to exchange information in an overwhelmingly more communal manner than was possible before. Horgan states, "Splitting has also been a catalyst for the intensification of paramilitary violence and played a major role in the recent politicization of the majority of the Republican movement."

VDR and Web 2.0

The last relevant pieces of literature to discuss are the recent work of Lorraine Bowman-Grieve and Maura Conway. Their recent paper, *Exploring the Form and Function of Dissident Irish Republican Online Discourses* seeks to effectively explore violent online political extremism by examining the use of the Internet by dissident Irish Republicans and their supporters.[80] This paper provides an excellent summation of VDR movements and how they are leveraging Web 2.0. This is not to imply that the Internet has supplanted face-to-face contacts amongst Irish Republicans, including violent

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[79] Ibid.

[80] Lorraine Bowman-Grieve and M. Conway, "Exploring the Form and Function of Dissident Irish Republican Online Discourses," *Media, War and Conflict* 5, no. 1 (2012): 71-85.

dissidents, rather that it currently plays a central role in the processes of radicalization into violent dissident groups.[81] Web 2.0 has an important support function in terms of providing an under-governed space for discussion, consumption, production, and pro-summation of Irish Republicanism content, theme, and messages. Web 2.0 provides a useful educative role in terms of introducing "newbies" to Violent Dissident Republicanism, while also acting as a "maintenance" space for the already committed.[82] Their paper effectively supports these conclusions, however it does not serve to explain how the internet, and by extension Web 2.0 technologies, is used by propagandists as a delivery mechanism. It also does not explore in depth theories used to elicit desired behaviors from those who are present in these spaces or connected via these platforms. In a second supporting piece, Bowman-Grieve studies in detail the websites of the "Irish Republican virtual community which, through regular user interaction, creates and sustains an online discourse of support for their cause and the currently active dissident movements."[83] Further analysis focuses on the function of a virtual community as Bowman-Grieve explains, "Through the creation of specific discourses they promote the formation of the individual political identity of participants. Over time, these communities develop their own set of norms with the potential to contribute to the creation of joint values, rules of acceptable behavior and even some sort of moral

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[81] Ibid.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Lorraine Bowman-Grieve, "Irish Republicanism and the Internet: Support for New Wave Dissidents," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 4, no. 2 (2010), accessed 6 May 2015, http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/97.

standards. With the formation of inter-personal bonds strong ties and links between online community members can be forged."[84]

This paper will seek expand the current research and to connect relevant Psychological and Sociological theories. These theories provide the bones of the narrative, or in a more kinetic sense, these theories provide the packaging, delivered by Web 2.0 platforms, in order to develop a new and unique base of support, enabled by the under-governed space of the internet.

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[84] Ibid.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Paul MA Linebarger[85] in his book *Psychological Warfare* lays out an effective

method for analyzing the information environment in order to provide situational

understanding to both the influence planner and the Commander. "Consistent analysis of

the same output, with references to basic topics over a sustained period, will inevitably

reveal the propaganda intentions of the source"[86] The methodology that I plan to use will

be primarily qualitative with elements of quantitative analysis supported by the

application of adductive reasoning to answer my primary research question. I chose this

method in order to look at the already existing theories, approaches, and data from

various disciplines. I will use this research to make certain key connections between

existing Sociological and Psychological theories. These connections will be used to form

a possible model supported with qualitative research.

Special Text 33-01, *The Military Information Support Operations Process* is the

doctrinal reference for counter-propaganda. It details how to integrate counter-

propaganda into the PSYOP processes, leading to the identification of adversary

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[85] During World War II, Linebarger began serving as a second lieutenant of the
United States Army, where he was involved in the creation of the Office of War
Information and the Operation Planning and Intelligence Board. He also helped organize
the Army's first psychological warfare section. In 1943, he was sent to China to
coordinate military intelligence operations. By the end of the war, he had risen to the rank
of major. In 1947, Linebarger moved to the Johns Hopkins University's School of
Advanced International Studies in Washington, DC, where he served as Professor of
Asiatic Studies. He used his experiences in the war to write the book Psychological
Warfare (1948). Many in the field of psychological operations regard it as a classic text.

[86] Paul M. A. Linebarger, *Psychological Warfare* (Landisville: Coachwhip
Publications, 2010).

propaganda capabilities, as well as the receptiveness of target audiences to the adversary's lines of persuasion. In current doctrine, this is a PSYOP task using objective analysis, subjective analysis, or source-content-audience-media-effects (SCAME) analysis for individual items. This analysis employs no modern method of rhetoric and discourse analysis in order to develop more effective counter propaganda and general messaging. The inclusion of current methods of rhetoric and discourse analysis methods would allow for a more complete understanding of the nature of communication, as inherently dialogic and that "even when partners in a dialogue have diametrically opposed goals, and their interactions are hostile they are still interactive and social."[87]

This interaction leads to argument stasis (points of contention). In rhetorical theory, there are five major stases which are progressive, meaning we cannot move later stases and advance the argument until we have addressed the others. This methodology of qualitative argumentation analysis, as set out, is the work of Frans H. Vans Eemeren and Rob Grootendorst.[88] This is a form of discourse analysis aimed at determining how real life argumentative encounters perform the function of resolving conflict. Using the model outlined below, as well as rhetorical analysis, will allow a systemic and uniform approach to identify, catalog, and trace the techniques and theories employed when developing the

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[87]William M. Marcellino, "Revisioning Strategic Communication Through Rhetoric and Discourse Analysis," *Joint Forces Quarterly* (1st Quarter 2015): 54-55.

[88] Van Eemersen and Grootendorst: Frans H. van Eemeren and Rob Grootendorst at the University of Amsterdam, developed Pragma-dialectics, or pragma-dialectical theory. Pragma is an argumentation theory that is used to analyze and evaluate argumentation in actual practice. Unlike strictly logical approaches (which focus on the study of argument as product), or purely communication approaches (which emphasize argument as a process), pragma-dialectics was developed to study the entirety of an argumentation as a discourse activity.

propaganda products. This additional analysis will help to expand the content analysis portion of the SCAME method. This type of analysis, combined with SCAME, provides the Commander and the influence professional a systematic approach to identify and exploit areas of opportunity within the enemy argument and narrative structure. These products will form the base of a qualitative analysis to assess and develop, through reverse engineering, a theoretical linkage and flow, which leads to product design and dissemination. This will provide a contextual basis to assess how the IRA exploited group identity within online social communities through the use of In-group and Out-group techniques to generate ground-swell for recruitment, fund generation, and propaganda operations.

My research looks at the recent data on IRA splinters groups, as referred to as Violent Dissident Republican Organizations. There are numerous Sociologists who have proposed various theories for how these social movements networks communicate, organize, and interact. To explore the effects of emerging methods of influence, the graphics below will be used. This graphic captures the linkages between Sociological and Psychological theories that are exploited via Web 2.0 platforms.
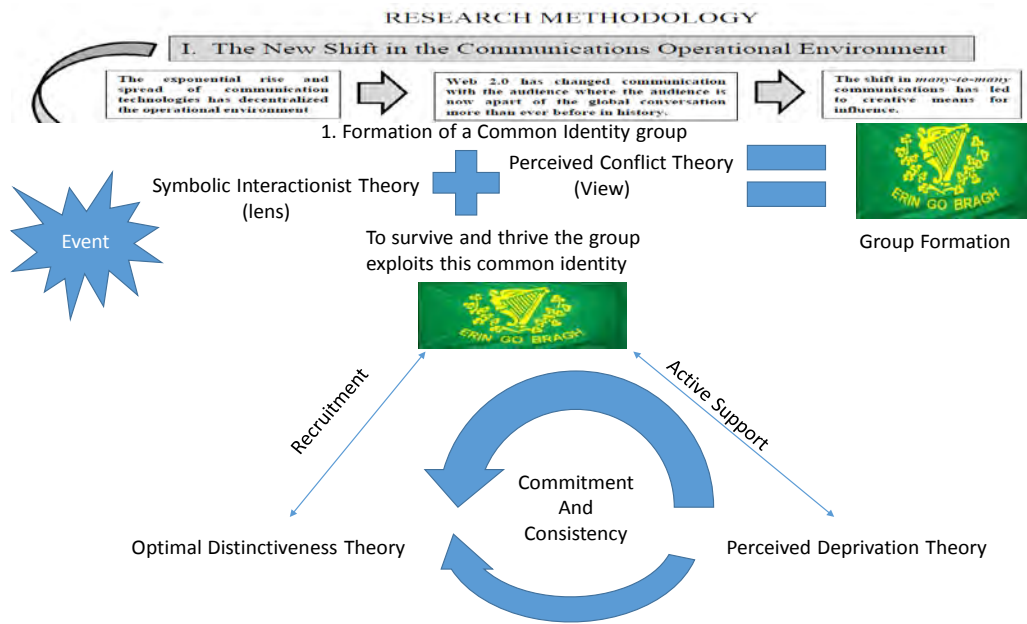
Figure 1.   Web 2.0 Enabled Social Identity Emergence and Exploitation Model

Source: Created by author and LTC Richard Davenport, CGSC Instructor.

To test this model, data was gathered over a four month period from two of the largest web 2.0 platforms, Twitter and Facebook. Data was collected using a Python[89]-based program to download tweets and Facebook posts from accounts associated with three major Irish Republican organizations. These organizations are 32 County Sovereignty Movement (32CSM), Republican Sinn Fein (RSF), and the Irish Republican Network for Unity (RNU). The organizations stated above were chosen due to their close affiliation as political fronts or wings of known violent dissident organizations, such as

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[89] Python is a widely used general-purpose programming language. It is widely used for applet design and to interface with Web 2.0 platforms via APIs. The design philosophy emphasizes code readability, and its syntax allows programmers to express concepts in fewer lines of code. For more information on how to program and use python see: http://www.codecademy.com.

Real IRA, Continuity IRA, etc. These accounts used were chosen on three parameters. First, 1.250 followers or greater total, secondly, an average daily post of five to ten, and lastly, self-Identification of pro-Dissident Irish republicanism by avatar, statements, and-or content shared. All three of the elements must have been present before an account could be selected as valid for collection and analysis.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

The area of the greatest structural, professional and cultural weakness is in our government's inability to influence foreign public and elite opinion. Specifically, our government fails to take fully into account the role of information, disinformation, ideas, values, culture and religion in the conduct of foreign and national security.[90]

— Dr. John Lenczowskik,
Full Spectrum Diplomacy and Grand Strategy

Social networks alone do not change people's minds; instead it is a two-step process. Opinions are first transmitted by the media, and then echoed by friends, family members and colleagues. It is in the second, social step that political opinions are formed. This is the step in which the Internet in general and social networks in particular make a difference. The Internet allows people to privately and publicly articulate and debate a welter of conflicting views.[91]

— Clay Shirky, *Foreign Affairs*

Clay Shirky's[92] words are spot on. The Internet and Web 2.0 do not change

anyone's opinion or move them to action. The Internet does provide two essential things

that make perception and ultimately behavior change possible, and they are space and

access. The factor of space, or more specifically an under-governed area in which a

network can exist, is provided by the Internet. The Internet also provides access to

potential audiences and allows those audiences to access information and connect with

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[90] Dr. John Lenczowski, *Full Spectrum Diplomacy and Grand Strategy* (Washington, DC: Institute of World Politics Press, 2009), 1.

[91] Clay Shirky, "The Political Power of Social Media," *Foreign Affairs* 90, no. 1 (January/February 2011).

[92] Clay Shirky: an American writer, consultant and teacher on the social and economic effects of Internet technologies. He has a joint appointment at New York University (NYU) as a Distinguished Writer in Residence at the Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute.

one another, as well as the movement. This connection, as Shirky says, is the social step. "This is the step in which the Internet in general and social networks in particular make a difference. The Internet allows people to privately and publicly articulate and debate a welter of conflicting views."[93] However, the Internet and Web 2.0 are simply mechanisms; they are tools and building materials. It takes a true believer to inspire, incite, and inflame those passions fostered by conflicted views. This inspiration and incitement is done through the manipulation of very basic human desires and few groups in history have done it better than the IRA. However, we must understand the theories discussed in the previous chapter are linked together to form an effective and ensnaring web.

The Social Movement Network typology of the IRA, enhanced by Web 2.0 has assisted Violent Dissident Republican (VDR) groups in the exploitation of Irish Republican social identity within online social communities. This is accomplished through sophisticated use of In-group and Out-group techniques used by thought leaders. They frame international and national issues to appeal to their domestic audience while using their domestic situation to gain support from the international community. These techniques enable them to recruit, generate funds, and conduct propaganda and other non-kinetic operations. The analysis provided in this chapter seeks to link psychological and sociological theories, both qualitatively and quantitatively to explain how and why these propagandists are so successful, even without large scale support within the country of Ireland itself.

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[93] Shirky, "The Political Power of Social Media."

In order to effectively envision how this movement operates, we must first understand the transition that took place within the movement. It is widely believed that the struggle between the IRA and the British Army ended following the Good Friday Agreement. In reality, the IRA's long campaign was ended in 2005 when the IRA's Army Council announced an end to its armed campaign and completed decommissioning its weapons. This threw the social movement organization of the IRA into turmoil. This inner turmoil began to dissolve and splinter the social movement organization into a series of interconnected, ideologically linked Social Movement Networks with various agendas and goals. Lorraine Bowman-Grieve states "There are a number of IRA splinter groups, however, that remain committed to a united Ireland, wrought by violent means if necessary. Breakaway or splinter Irish Republican terrorist groups are generally known as "dissidents" or, in common parlance, "the Dissidents."[94]

Professor Doowan Lee,[95] of the Naval Post Graduate School, offers the major prerequisite conditions for the development of a social movement. He states "Social-movement theory is predicated upon the notion that four broad factors are often highly correlated with successful resistance or insurgent movements: broad socio-economic processes, political opportunity, indigenous organizational strength, and insurgent consciousness."[96] Lee refers to the grievance identification process as "systemic strains

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[94] Bowman-Grieve and Conway, "Exploring the Form and Function of Dissident Irish Republican Online Discourses," 1.

[95] Doowan Lee is a Lecturer, Defense Analysis Department at the Naval Post Graduate School and the Analytic Lead of the UW Fusion Cell at NPS.

[96] Doowan Lee, "A Social Movement Approach to Unconventional Warfare," *Special Warfare* 26, no. 3 (July 2013): 27.

that can either weaken or fracture an existing political authority."[97] "Some of the examples found include economic downturns, poverty, ethnic division, demographic pressures, and associated issues."[98] This grievance becomes the cornerstone of a movement. The grievance leads into the first stage of the social movement life cycle known as the emergence, or, as described by Herbert Blumer[99] the "social ferment" stage.[100] In the emergence or formation stage, a social movement has little to no organization. This is the point at which the group typology undergoes a serious change. During stage one, a grievance allows people to form as a Common Bond Group. As stated in chapter 2, Common Bond Groups are, as they sound, attachments are based on similarities and affinities between members.[101] As the common bond of the grievance is leveraged and strengthened, homophily, and other group principles and dynamics like reciprocity begin to establish conditions for the next stage.[102]

This next stage begins with the identification and-or coalescence of widespread discontent[103] Potential participants are unhappy with some policy or some social

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[97] Ibid., 29.

[98] Ibid.

[99] Herbert Blumer, American sociologist whose main scholarly interests were symbolic interactionism and Social movements.

[100] Porta and Diani, 2006; Hermert Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1969), vii, 150.

[101] For more information in Group Dynamics see Christakis and Fowler, *Connected*.

[102] Cialdini, *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*, 13.

[103] John J. Macionis, *Sociology* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2001); Rex D. Hopper, "The Revolutionary Process: A Frame of Reference for the Study of

condition, but they have not taken any action in order to redress their grievances in either an individual or a collective action. Once a grievance is identified, it is built into a potential political opportunity structure. This political opportunity structure is imperative to understanding the early stages of the social movement formation process. The group at this point has moved from a CBG into a Common Identity Group (CIG). CIGs are based on attachment to a common shared identity within the group. Members of CIGs are far more attached to the identity of the group, rather than to the members of the group at large. CBGs become CIGs when a grievance is framed correctly via the use of Perceived Deprivation Theory (PDT) or Optimal Distinctiveness Theory (ODT). This use of framing sets conditions for a transition between the two typologies. [104] CIGs begin a second transformation when the emerging identity that is centered on a grievance is linked to an emerging political opportunity structure. Political opportunities are defined as "consistent, but not necessarily formal or permanent signals to social or political actors that either encourage or discourage them to use their internal resources to form collective action."[105] These emerging political opportunities become symbols and signs to be defined by the group in terms of intrinsic value. Assigning a value to a symbol, place, or event allows for everything to have new meaning in the context of the emerging group

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Revolutionary Movements," *Social Forces* 28, no. 3 (March 1950): 270-79, accessed 22 February 2015, http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/2572010?ref=no-x-route:f1af63370604a41cf078622f5266c5a3.

[104] Kai Sassenberg, "Common Bond and Common Identity Groups on the Internet: Attachment and Normative Behavior in On-topic and Off-topic Chats," *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice* 6, no. 1 (2002): 27-37.

[105] Lee, 30.

identity. This assigning of meaning and value is explained by the theory of Symbolic Interactionism.

Symbolic Interactionism is a sociological perspective on self and society based on the ideas of George H. Mead (1934), Charles H. Cooley (1902), W. I. Thomas (1931), as well as other pragmatists associated primarily with the University of Chicago in the early 20th century.[106] This symbolic domain can modify the development of the sense of social identify by affecting the process of socialization. Socialization is the processes through which personalities and self-concepts are formed, and values and attitudes are transmitted. This transmission is linked to the formation of the social self and therefore social identity.

We understand how a grievance is formed and a potential lens on how that grievance is seen by the world at large. The next essential step is to comprehend how these factors contribute to the development and exploitation of social identity. The central role played by psychological processes of collective identification cannot be overstated. Typically, and as is the case with Violent Dissident Republican terrorist organizations, they present themselves as the defenders of the values and interests of a particular community. Social Identity Theory predicts that self-identification as members of a much larger community will help them to achieve their personal goals.

Social psychologists explain the psychological characteristics of individuals as a result of several iterations of social interaction. For example, people are heavily influenced by the political and social environment which they share with friends and

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[106] Encyclopedia.com, "Symbolic Interactionism," 1 January 2003, accessed 4 March 2015, http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Symbolic_Interactionism.aspx.

family. Consequently, growing up in an environment with radical ideas and values can lead to joining a group that espouses the same world views. However, it is important to note that social identity, particularly of an extremist nature, is often due to relationships with people who embrace extremist ideas, and often outside the familial or other typical relationships. Marc D. Sageman[107] states that personal paths, interactions, and choices may lead young Muslims to become jihadists.[108]According to Sageman's research, joining a jihadist organization such as al-Qaeda stems from the individual making an unintentional friendship with a person who has radical jihadists' views. In the sample of 168 subjects who were investigated by Sageman, 68 percent said friendship was the main influencing factor contributing to joining jihadist groups.

This psycho-social process also emphasizes the importance of "secondary socialization"[109] processes in which people become involved after joining a radical organization. This new social identity that is developed inside an organization shapes the mentality of its members, intensifying their commitment and preparing them for action.[110] This social identity development and socialization process is exploited through

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[107] Marc Sageman is an author, M.D., Ph.D., and a former CIA Operations Officer. He has advised various branches of the U.S. government in the War on Terror. He has contributed extensively to the understanding of social networks influence the radicalization process.

[108] Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

[109] Luis de la Corte, "Explaining Terrorism: A Psychosocial Approach," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 1, no. 2 (2007), accessed 22 January 2015, http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/8/html.

[110] For Further reading and information on the work of De La Corte see Alejandro Vargas Jr, "Applying Psychosocial Theories of Terrorism to the Radicalization Process:

the use of effective frames. Pamela Oliver and Hank Johnston,[111] in *What a Good Idea!*

Frame Analysis and Social Movement Research,[112] draw the following conclusion

regarding frames: "First, frames are individual cognitive structures, located 'within the

black box of mental life' that orient and guide interpretation of individual experience."[113]

Frames "enable individuals to locate, perceive, identify, and label occurrences,"[114] and

"selectively punctuate and encode objects, situations, events, experiences and sequences

of actions within one's present and past environment."[115]

A Mapping of De La Corte's Seven Principles to Homegrown Radicals" (Thesis, Naval
Postgraduate School Monterey CA, 2011).

[111] Pamela Oliver and Hank Johnston: Distinguished sociological researchers
focused on social movement and frame theory. See also John A. Noakes, eds., *Frames of
Protest: Social Movements and the Framing Perspective* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and
Littlefield, 2005), 205-212.

[112] For further information on use of frames in persuasion and influence see Dr.
Rhodes, Pratkanis' "pictures in our heads" or Perloff's ideas.

[113] Pamela Oliver and Hank Johnston, "What a Good Idea? Frames and Ideologies
in Social Movement Research," accessed 22 March 2015, http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/
~oliver/PROTESTS/ArticleCopies/Frames.2.29.00.pdf.

[114] Snow et al., 464.

[115] Snow and Benford, "Ideology, Frame Resonance, and Participant
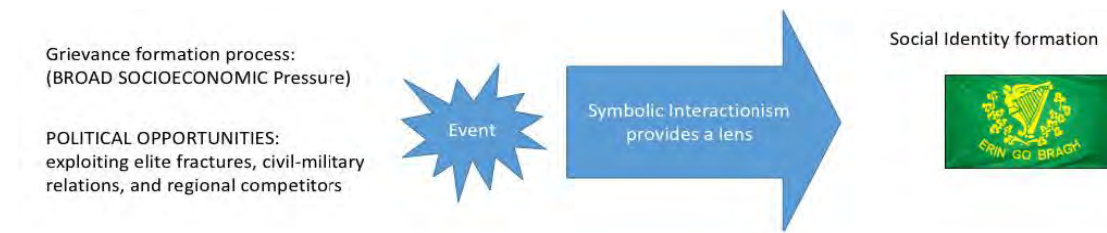Mobilization," 137.

Figure 2.   Grievance based Social Identity emergence model

Source: Created by author.

Figure 2 shows how the grievance formation process and identification of political opportunities become the catalyst for an event. This event is then framed in context and is given meaning through Symbolic Interactionism, leading to the development of an emerging social identity.

These frames help to set the conditions for the application of other psychological theories which draw a potential adherent to identify with a certain frame. Frame alignment theory functions like the curtains on a window restricting the view of the observer. Frame alignment describes what happens in small informal groups that promote social change. Supporters attempt to recruit others to a mobilizing frame by providing examples that legitimize the movement. If others accept the examples and rationale, they adjust their views so they are aligned with the new mobilizing frame. According to David Snow[116] and numerous others in this field of study, frame alignment includes frame bridging, frame amplification, frame extension, and frame transformation. Frame

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[116] David A Snow, Ph.D., University of California, Los Angeles, 1976.Collective behavior, protest, and social movements; framing processes, social psychology, and culture. Robert D. Beneford Ph.D., Professor University of South Florida department of sociology. Conduct research with David A Snow which focused on the framing process of protest movements.

bridging occurs when organizations attempt to tie its frame into another accepted frame to enhance its overall impact. The purpose of frame application is an obvious one, and frame extension occurs when a social movement is attempting to enlarge its adherent pool by portraying its objectives or activities as being a lager set of values and interests beyond that of its initial supporters.

Table 1 exemplifies the development of key frames coupled with Optimal Distinctness Theory (ODT) and Perceived Deprivation Theory (PDT). These two theories when applied through effective framing help to promote recruitment, and support behaviors.

Table 1.   Example of a Psycho-Social Narrative Framework

Ideological resources	Psycho-social functions
Arguments and beliefs that: identify and criticize certain social injustices, offense, or threats that affect a terrorist's reference community.	· Activation of feelings of frustration and moral outrage
Arguments and beliefs that: Identify a collective enemy as responsible for such injustices, offense or threats and insults.	· Inhibition of empathetic reactions toward victims
Those arguments and beliefs configure a stereotype which devalues the enemy image even to the point of dehumanization.	· Activation of feelings of hatred and desires for revenge
Arguments and beliefs that describe a positive social identity shared by terrorists and their reference community.	· Identification of terrorists with the interests and values of their reference community
Arguments and beliefs that define: 1) collective goals linked with the values and interests of the terrorist's reference community; 2) violence as the only effective method to achieve those collective goals.	· Legitimization of violence by their presumed political, social, or religious consequences
Arguments and beliefs which predict a future state in which terrorists would have reached their collective goals through violence.	· Increase in the efficacy expectations associated with terrorist activity

Source: Luis De La Corte, "Explaining Terrorism: A Psychosocial Approach," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 1, no. 2 (2007), accessed 22 January 2015, ttp://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/8/html.

Table 1, Luis De la Corte's framework provides excellent anecdotal evidence of wide use of PDT and ODT. We can clearly see in column one the setting of frames predicated on PDT and ODT. That then ties into emerging narrative goals.

In these arguments or frames we can clearly see the identification and exploitation of In-group and Out-group mentalities via ODT and PDT. It is assumed that these two theories are not consciously used by propagandists; however they are exploited continuously over time. In the table above, we see "activation of feelings of outrage and

frustration"[117] as a psycho-social response to frames designed to criticize social injustice and therefore these frames are predicated on perceived deprivation.
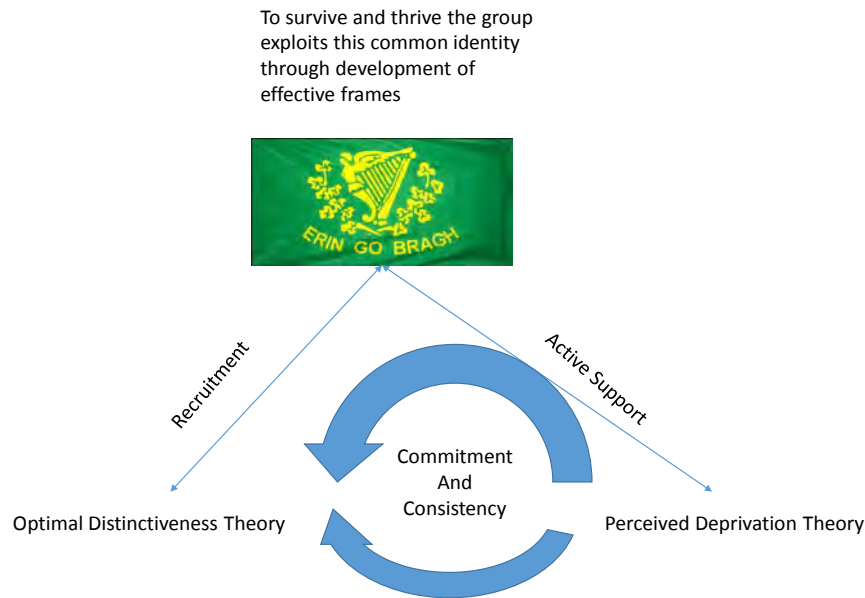
Figure 3.   Social Identity Emergence and Exploitation Model

Source: Created by author.

This figure shows that the two tasks a group must true to survive and thrive. It must recruit in order to build strength and it must make use of that strength to remain relevant.

The question we must now ask is does this model hold true in the online environment? The answer is to this question is a resounding yes. As studies of the online

[117] De la Corte.

community have increased, the concept of online community has become a more accepted social construct. People's ideas about community are formed, in part, through interactions both in online forums as well as those in face to face interactions. As a result, people act in their communities according to the meanings they derive about their environment, whether online or offline, from those interactions. This evidence indicates that online communication may very well take on different meanings for different people depending on information, circumstance, relationships, power, and other systems that make up communities of practice. Nancy Byam,[118] in her book, *Personal Connections in the Digital Age*, discusses the theory of Hyper-Personal Communication (HPC). HPC is predicated on the work of J. B. Walther and suggests that <u>computer mediated communication</u> (CMC) can become hyper-personal because it "exceeds [face-to-face] interaction." HPC provides senders a host of communicative advantages over traditional interaction.[119] A hyper-personal message sender has a greater ability to strategically develop and edit self-presentation, enabling a selective and optimized presentation of one's self to others.

The Internet and Web 2.0 platforms provide users access to self-selected ready-made communities. VDR recruiters and propagandists can study their potential recruits as members of their own community while adapting and developing arguments and frames, while simultaneously leveraging the anonymity of the Internet which allows them to

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[118] Nancy Baym, American academic and former communication professor at University of Kansas. She is now the principal researcher at Microsoft New England and a visiting professor of comparative media studies at MIT.

[119] J. B. Walther, "Computer--Mediated Communication: Impersonal, Interpersonal, and Hyperpersonal Interaction," *Communication Research* 2, no. 1 (1996): 3-43.

remake their personal "image" through the benefits of HPC. "The IRA is unquestionably the most heavily studied terrorist organi[s]ation of the past forty years,"[120] and yet there is not a dearth of research into the IRA's online presence. This may be explained by a number of factors, including the low levels of internet access in Northern Ireland at the official cessation of the Troubles, and a narrowly focused attention by researchers who are primarily concerned with understanding violent Islamist Internet strategies.[121] Another critical factor is likely the fact the PIRA officially ended their armed campaign in 2005. Following this event, both the VDR threat and the changed Internet landscape had changed greatly. While support for Irish Republicanism in general is plentiful online, it is more difficult to get a real sense for distinct groups such as the RIRA and the CIRA. "Websites in support of Irish Republicanism are largely broadcast in nature, which is in keeping with research findings on the structuring of the official websites of other ethno-nationalist terrorist groups and their affiliates."[122]

The figure below is a graphical representation of the model in full. This model describes how the proliferation of Information Communicative Technologies (ICT) has expanded the ability of groups to access social identities to facilitate and exploit active and tacit support behaviors in online users.

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[120] Magnus Ranstorp, ed., *Mapping Terrorism Research: State of the Art Gaps and Future Direction* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

[121] For an excellent introduction to this subject matter see Bowman-Grieve and Conway, "Exploring the Form and Function of Dissident Irish Republican Online Discourses."

[122] Bowman-Grieve and Conway, "Exploring the Form and Function of Dissident Irish Republican Online Discourses."
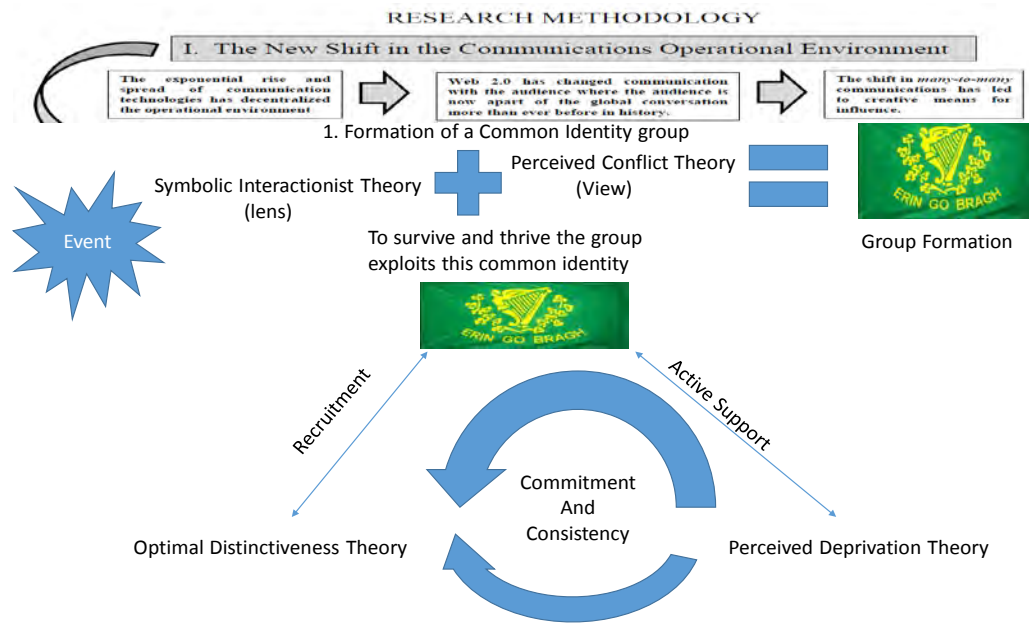
Figure 4. Web 2.0 Enabled Social Identity Emergence and Exploitation Model

Source: Created by author and LTC Richard Davenport. This figure depicts the model in full. An event is seen and contextualized through PDT. PDT elicits the development of social identity in order to correct the perceived slight. This identity the uses ODT frame the benefits of membership. PDT is used to motivate current members to act on behalf of the movement and final consistency, also known as reciprocity reinforces the hold of group.

We have an idea of the conditions and requirements needed for the formation of a social movement and how that movement must leverage its social identify to survive, yet, the question remains: How is this accomplished? The simple answer is through the development of a narrative. Narratives are "compelling storylines which can explain events convincingly and from which inferences can be drawn."[123] In a similar view, Michael Vlahos, to divide and explain the importance of narrative in war has stated, "in

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[123] Lawrence Freedman, *The Transformation of Strategic Affairs*, Adelphi Paper No. 379 (Abingdon: Routledge, March 2006), 22.

war, narrative is much more than just a story. 'Narrative' may sound like a fancy literary word, but it is actually the foundation of all strategy, upon which all else–policy, rhetoric and action–is built."[124] War narratives need to be identified and critically examined on their own terms, for they can illuminate the inner nature of the war itself. A war narrative does three essential things:

> First, it is the organizing framework for policy. Policy cannot exist without an interlocking foundation of 'truths' that people easily accept because they appear to be self-evident and undeniable. Second, this 'story' works as a framework precisely because it represents just such an existential vision. The 'truths' that it asserts are culturally impossible to disassemble or even criticize. Third, having presented a war logic that is beyond dispute, the narrative then serves practically as the anointed rhetorical handbook for how the war is to be argued and described.[125]

Narratives provide an essential element in the development and employment of non-lethal strategies. Nonlethal strategies are defined here as "those instruments aimed at modifying or disrupting an adversary's ability to operate effectively while also changing his behavior using nonlethal means. Nonlethal fires change perceptions while shaping conditions that are favorable to our own goals and objectives."[126] Many of the nonlethal strategies fall under Information Operations (IO). Commanders now realize that IO is not a collection of information-related capabilities and actions, but a critical component to military campaigns. COL Ralph Baker, a former brigade Commander in Baghdad during Operation Iraqi Freedom said, "I quickly discovered that IO was going to be one of the

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[124] Michael Vlahos, "The Long War: A Self-defeating Prophecy," *Asia Times*, 9 September 2006.

[125] Ibid.

[126] Dewey A. Granger, "Integration of Lethal and Nonlethal Fires: The Future of the Joint Fires Cell" (Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, 2009), 19.

two most vital tools (along with human intelligence) I would need to be successful in a counterinsurgency (COIN) campaign."[127] In order to be more effective in achieving effects with cognitive Information Related Capabilities (IRC) such as public affairs, psychological operations, and military deception, we must develop a targeting methodology that allows for the systematic analysis of enemy capabilities in the cognitive domain regardless of the delivery mechanism. Only through a more robust analysis can we mass the effects of various cognitive IRCs' effect. Paul MA Linebarger in his book *Psychological Warfare* lays out an effective method for analyzing the information environment in order to provide situational understanding to both the influence planner and the Commander. He states, "Consistent analysis of the same output with references to basic topics over a sustained period will inevitably reveal the propaganda intentions of the source"[128]

Special Text 33-01, *Military Information Support Operations Process* is the doctrinal reference for counter-propaganda. It details how to integrate counter-propaganda into the PSYOP processes, leading to the identification of adversary propaganda capabilities, as well as the receptiveness of target audiences to the adversary's lines of persuasion. In current doctrine, this is a PSYOP task using objective and subjective analysis or source-content-audience-media-effects (SCAME) analysis for individual items. This analysis is rarely conducted and employs no modern method of analysis in order to develop more effective counter propaganda and general messaging.

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[127] Ralph O. Baker, "The Decisive Weapon: A Brigade Combat Team Commander's Perspective on Information Operations," *Military Review* (May-June 2006): 13.

[128] Linebarger, "Psychological Warfare."

The SCAME process should be updated to include rhetoric and discourse analysis. The inclusion of current methods of rhetoric and discourse analysis methods would force the PSYOP community to understand that communication is inherently dialogic and that "even when partners in a dialogue have diametrically opposed goals, and their interactions are hostile they are still interactive and social."[129] This interaction leads to argument stasis (points of contention). In rhetorical theory, there are five major stases which are progressive, meaning we cannot move later stases and advance the argument until we have addressed the others. This type of analysis combined with SCAME provides the Commander and the influence professional a systematic approach to identify and exploit areas of opportunity within the enemy argument and narrative structure.

We will use the basic structure outlined above and an expanded SCAME method to begin our qualitative analysis of VDR online arguments as well as to analyze posts on various internet platforms. Due to Web 2.0 and the proliferation of ICTs, the ability to interact has grown beyond the world of list servers and discussion forums. Table 2 provides an early snapshot of Irish Republican online discourse by site, which helped form the initial leg of the analysis stool. It is my hope that the other two legs can be built through Web 2.0 platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. For this paper, data samples are drawn exclusively from Web 2.0 platforms in order to expand the current body of work. Although Facebook provides data as well, Twitter analysis provided the largest body of data in terms of volume and content shared within the 120-day data collection period.

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[129] Marcellino, 54-55.

The table below shows an example of Irish Republican Online presence. The table is focused on a chatroom type exchange and not Web 2.0 platforms.

Table 2.   Irish Republican Internet Discussion Forums: Membership Data

Web forum	Members in April 2010	Members in August 2011	Growth (%)	Most users ever online
Irish Republican http://www.irishrepublican.n	11,754	15,336	23.3	745
Irish Freedom News http://www.irishfreedomnews.com	513	–	–	34
Irish Republican Socialist Forum http://rsmforum.proboards.com/index.cg	1,667	1,953	14.6	169
Up the RA! http://upthera.free-forums.org/	336	1,117	69.9	88
Irish Republican Bulletin Board http://admin2.7.forumer.com/	1,209	1,408	14.1	133
Irish-Nationalism /13 ɔ://www.irish-nationalism.net	1,364	–	–	339
Ireland's Future http://irelandsfuture.free-forums.org	1,107	–	–	67

Source: Lorraine Bowman-Grieve, "Irish Republicanism and the Internet: Support for New Wave Dissidents," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 4, no. 2 (2010): 3, accessed 6 May 2015, http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/97.

John Horgan in his book *Divided We Stand* points out the research of Gary LaFree and Gary Ackerman to further identify the following common themes from research on the psychology of terrorism:

> The inability of psychopathology to explain terrorism; The absence of any clear terrorist personality profile; Common themes of trauma, injustice, and alienation providing strong motivational 'push' factors for involvement in terrorism; The allure of personal status and other rewards (e.g., excitement) proved a powerful 'pull' factor.[130]

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[130] Gary LaFree and Gary Ackerman, "The Empirical Study of Terrorism: Social and Legal Research," *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* 5, no. 1 (2009): 347-374.

The pull factor identifies a clear use of Optimal Distinctiveness theory. We can clearly see the push factor is used to motivate people to action by highlighting themes of trauma and perceived deprivation. Although these theories are not exclusive to the VDR groups, they form a clear basis for the development of their argumentative structures. The model discussed on page 10 of this chapter was applied to the Web 2.0 platforms mentioned in chapter 3, specifically Facebook and Twitter. The goal of this was specifically to expand and update the SCAME framework, specifically the content analysis section for a dynamic, two-way communication environment.

The collection of data occurred over a four month period, and was done both manually and electronically. Manual collection was used as a supplemental measure. Electronic collection was conducted using a Python language-based program, which, catalogued and downloaded relevant content into a structured data format. These collection efforts resulted in a total of 4,000 data points. These data points were applied to the model described above and the results were broken down into three broad categories: content developed to engender support, content with mixed intent, and content to engender actions.

Content developed to engender support made up 1500 total samples. Support content shared generally consistent characteristics in that it attempted to exploit emerging social identity through Optimal Distinctiveness Theory (ODT) using diagnostic and or prognostic framing predicated on collective memory. Usually support based posts or tweets were linked to large "policy" or "positional" documents to reinforce the position presented. John Horgan's investigation into VDR supports these observations. He states that, "All of the dissident groups have, with varying effectiveness, exploited the Internet

to promote their objectives. Republican Sinn Fein (RSF) and 32 County Sovereignty

Movement (32 CSM) in particular have devoted considerable resources to the

development of online and print newsletters. These provide detailed insight into the

levels of activity (both violent and nonviolent) of the groups. RSF's Saoirse, for example,

provides details of commemorative ceremonies, public meetings, and other activities

throughout Ireland, both north and south."[131]

Mixed data account for 2000 pieces of total data. Mixed data material can

generally be characterized by the uses of both ODT and PDT with diagnostic framing to

contextualize and exploit or explain an action or statement. These posts seek to shape

intentions by exploiting success or mitigating failure of a given action, either friendly or

adversarial. Horgan again offers a unique observation about mixed content; he describes

this type of content as "Signature aspects of how respective strategic goals are consistent

(or made to appear consistent) with expressions of support in other arenas, whether

through statements claimed by the military arms or statements made by members of the

groups to media."[132] The last broad category is content developed to engender action.

This category of content accounted for 500 total data points. This content is generally

characterized by short post length, coupled with a large volume of posts, which focus on

the application of PDT using the devices of chosen wound, future deprivations, and cost

benefit.

Based on these data points we can draw a few overall narrative points common to

dissident republican personalities and content. Dissident Republicans generally support

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[131] Horgan, *Divided We Stand*, Kindle Location: 2684.

[132] Ibid.

the following positions: Rejection of the Good Friday Agreement, rejection of the

authority of the Sinn Féin, an end to partition, the removal of any kind of British

mechanism in Northern Ireland, and the formation of a united and generally socialist

Ireland.

These foundational statements form the basis for tactical messaging at the local

level. Tactical messaging at the local level seems to be aimed largely at justifying civil

disobedience and potentially the use of armed struggle. Additionally, tactical messaging

focuses on the characterization of Sinn Féin having lost its Republican ideals, and not

recognizing or actively undermining the authority of the Police Service of Northern

Ireland, as we as gaining support both through recruitment as well as tacit community

support. For example:

> When asked if RSF ultimately has to stand for election to communicate its
> political message, member Cait Trainor replied, 'Certainly not. We have a
> mandate stretching right back to 1798. We really don't need the public to rubber
> stamp the republican movement. We've been here for a long, long time.'
> Trainor's response illustrates a key principle of what it means to be a member of
> RSF—pragmatism continues to be the enemy of the Republican purist. It is this
> 'purity' that is central to RSF's ideology.[133]

The following sections will individually break down data and observation by

dissident republican group. We will begin with 32 CSM, move to RSF and finally the

Irish Republican Unity Network. 32 CSM and its supporters are primarily concerned with

the restoration of Ireland's sovereignty. This goal of a whole united and free Ireland

permeates their efforts. In the collection process, 32 CSM personas and supporters

accounted for a total of 1500 pieces of content across Web 2.0 platforms (Facebook and

Twitter).

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[133] Horgan.

Table 3.   Total Content Breakdown over the Collection Period for 32 CSM

Support Oriented	Mixed	Call to action
450	1000	50

Source: Created by author.

Support oriented posters had strong visual elements and were tied to positional statements which served to increase the legitimacy of the overall message by tying it back to a larger societal narrative.

Figure 5.   32 CSM Facebook Post using an Electronic Positional Leaflet

Source: Facebook, "32 County Sovereignty Movement," accessed 2 April 2015, https://www.facebook.com/32CountySovereigntyMovement.

Figure 5 is an example of an ODT focused document. It explains a basis for action. This informative aspects as well as the length are critical factors when looking ODT orient materials.

Mixed content made up the majority of 32 CSM activity for the reported period. This content tended to be shorter, but also visually based, often showing protest pictures of supporters with banners. The goal of this was clear, to show an active, vibrant, and growing organization dealing with current issues.

Figure 6.   Use of Word-Image-Deed Linkage to Contextualize Action
within the Overall Narrative

Source: Facebook, "32 County Sovereignty Movement," accessed 2 April 2015,
https://www.facebook.com/32CountySovereigntyMovement.

Figure 6 is an example of text in a Facebook post used to contextualize a protest picture. Regardless of the number of participants or effect, the act of protest is successful, due to framing which highlights PDT.

We can clearly see the use of PDT applied in figure 6. Word usage such as protest, ongoing, injustice, and torture imply to supporters that fellow Republicans are being deprived and it is their responsibility to act. In the figure above we can clearly see the use of ODT with the phrase "Irish people," which it used to elicit access to that social identify. It also subtlety links Irish people with those of Republican ideals through discussion right to self-determination, which is only "denied" to Northern Ireland.

It is these trends that provide a view of the organization as a whole. The majority of reported content is geared to maintain the image of a long standing, successful, and active organization. As long as this rhetoric and content remain consistent, it can be hypothesized that low level activity will continue for the foreseeable future, and the group is not actively planning a major recruitment or action effort but seeking to maintain its current standing and membership. With this information we can use the analysis to provided recommendations for possible interdiction strategies based on using an argument stata analysis to locate potential points of inconsistency.

Republican Sinn Fein (RSF) is primarily concerned with Irish national unity and freedom from British rule. In the collection process RSF personas and supporters accounted for a total of 1100 pieces of content across Web 2.0 platforms (Facebook and Twitter).

Table 4.   Total Content Breakdown over the Collection Period for RSF

Support Oriented	Mixed	Call to action
234	366	500

Source: Created by author.

Figure 7.   RSF examples of Call to Action

Source: Facebook, "Republican Sinn Fein," accessed 15 April 2015, https://www.facebook.com/pages/Republican-Sinn-F%C3%A9in/312436515470517. NOTE: The left screen capture provides an address to donate money to prisoners dependent. The right screen capture calls for political protest based on failed implementation of the August '10 Agreement.

The figures above are prime examples of calls to action. These examples typified the content shared by RSF personas and supporters for the collection period. RSF content is well designed and laid out. With respect to the composition, they make excellent use of space, contrast, and text to provide a stimulating and eye catching product. Heavy use of typical VDR colors such as green, orange, and red are used to highlight key message points. In the post, we notice a supporter persona "Liam Douglas" has shared the photo

and donation information from the RSF's main Facebook page. This sharing of content into a personal social network provides social proof and validity to the proposed action of donating to Republican prisoners dependents, further encouraging the desired behavior due to the homophily present within personal networks.

We can see the use of PDT for framing effect here. Republican prisoners are denied political status and so their dependents are denied access to benefits. If supporting Republican ideals supports the families of the men and women who are suffering to accomplish them, then it is simple to convince individuals to do both. The second image also highlights a call to action in different way. The goal is to push for the recognition of a negotiated agreement between the UK and Ireland, to restore the 6 counties of Northern Ireland to Irish control. The use of the word "restore" clearly shows the use of PDT.

The clear focus on actions by RSF could be aimed at regaining some of its centrality within the VDR movement. It also seeks to provide low barriers to entry activities to allow many "Republicans" to participate and become fully part of the movement. This call to action phase will likely be followed by phases of mixed messaging design to capitalize on and contextualize the actions conducted.

The final group in this study is the Republican Network for Unity (RNU). This group seems relatively new to the dissident Republican scene and, as such, was largely focused on building a body of support.

Table 5.   Total Content Breakdown over the Collection Period for RNU

Support Oriented	Mixed	Call to action
700	425	275

Source: Created by author.

The majority of its content linked to longer position statements, essays, or other foundational documents. RNU seemed to have a main presence on Twitter; however its personas and supporters were able to link to good-standing and well-maintained web pages and Facebook pages. RNU's use of graphic materials was unique in color and used a nostalgic quality in its presentation and design. This, combined with a diverse and complete Internet eco-system, shows a high level of technical sophistication.

Figure 8.   Example of linking of Web 2.0 Platforms to
develop a Content Ecosystem

NOTE: In the Twitter post on the left, we see the use of all capitals and inflammatory language to draw attention and "hook" the reader.

Here, in figure 8 we see a persona providing a link on Twitter to a longer expository piece about a British official conducting a "false flag" operation to imprison Seamus Daly.[134] This type of approach was common for RNU during the reporting period, showing a clear attempt to establish creditability and develop a base of support. Below is an example of an online recruitment "leaflet" designed by the same organization.

Figure 9.   Simple but effective Recruitment Leaflet

Source: Republican Network for Unity, "Rebuilding the Republican Struggle," Posted 7 August 2014, accessed 22 April 2015, http://www.republicanunity.org/.

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[134] Seamus Daly: In 2009, Daly, along with three other Real IRA members were ruled to be civilly liable for the Omagh Bombing and ordered by a Belfast court to pay £1.5 million to the victims of the attack. In February 2015 Northern Ireland's director of public prosecutions ordered that Daly face charges "both for the Omagh bomb and Lisburn bomb and the charges associated with those two incidents." VDR supporters believe that Daly is the victim of a "framing" operation by the British government.

These types of actions illustrate an attempt to use ODT. They attempt to establish a new inclusive identity within the dissident Republican framework and are a sign that using ODT to engender support is almost a default action. It is interesting to note that RNU seems to want to be a unifying faction geared towards leveraging collective strength on behalf of the VDR cause. The data above provides clear evidence that ODT and PDT play key roles in the framing and development of products and overall narratives. ODT and PDT can further be applied as analytical filters. This classification aspect potentially allows the observer to classify arguments and approaches which can further expand the potential of content analysis within the SCAME framework. Expanding the content analysis section provides the influence professional keen insight into the development, direction, and overall objective, not just for a single piece of propaganda but for a whole narrative line. This narrative line can then be analyzed using rhetorical analysis framework to provide Commanders and planners possible narrative interdiction points. The example below uses 32 CSM's collected data to show a fully developed potential output.

Collected data and expanded content analysis could be depicted in cyclical manner which allows for planners to see data in a context of operational time. For example, see below.

Potential Organizational Informational Cycle

120 day collection window

1000- Mixed content
 450- Support
   50- Call to action

Primary Narrative Objective: Expolit current conidtions to maintain current "market share"

Support content 40 days

Mixed content 60 days

C2A content 20 days

Figure 10. Example of an Analytical Product

Source: Created by author.
Note: This product would provide influence planner and the commander better situational understanding of the narrative aspect of the informational space.

Table 6.   Argument Stases

Stasis Point	Taliban Propaganda	ISAF Message
Existence: Does it exist/did it happen?		
Definition: If it exists, what kind of thing is it?	ISAF members are crusade invaders, a threat to Islam.	
Value/Quality: Is it worse or better, increasing or decreasing?		ISAF minimizes loss of civilian life. ISAF takes minimal casualties. ISAF maximizes enemies killed.
Cause: What is its origin?		
Action: How should we respond?		

Source: William M. Marcellino, "Revisioning Strategic Communication Through Rhetoric and Discourse Analysis," *Joint Forces Quarterly* (2015): 52-59.
NOTE: Stases evaluation framework, a simple and systematic approach to argument analysis.

Once this analysis is complete, the primary narrative objective can be evaluated against argument stasis (points of contention.) In rhetorical theory there are five major stases which are progressive, meaning we cannot move later stases and advance the argument until we have addressed the others. This type of analysis supported by an expanded SCAME provides the Commander and the influence professional a systematic approach to identify, assess, and exploit areas of opportunity within the enemy argument and narrative structures to greater effect.
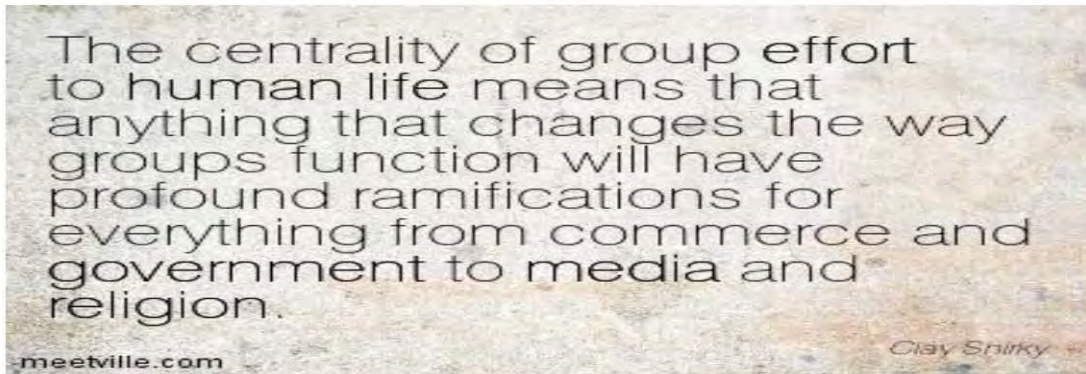
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Figure 11. Internet MEME based on Clay Shirky's Speeches

Source: Meetville.com, "Famous Clay Shirky Quotes," accessed 2 May 2015, https://meetville.com/images/quotes/Quotation-Clay-Shirky-society-Meetville-Quotes-26212.jpg.
NOTE: This quote shows how prolific pro-summation of internet content is. Clay Shirky's thoughts now become sharable "designer content."

Conclusions

The purpose of this thesis was to determine how the social movement network of the IRA exploited online social identity to support recruitment, fundraising and propaganda operations. After focused and careful analysis, the answer is careful elicitation and exploitation of social identity. Another essential aspect that emerged from this research was the mutability that social movements are capable of due to the freedom of the Internet provides. The connective power of Web 2.0 paired with the sanctuary offered by the Internet holistically, enables dissident organizations to proceed from Social

Movement Organizations (SMO) to decentralized cellular Social Movement Networks (SMN) connected by a social identify and strengthened by a narrative that accesses collective memory. This mutability and connection enable a movement to be highly reactive and resistant to pressure and adversity in the physical environment.

This strength is developed through extensive and careful elicitation of social identity by establishing In-grouping and Out-grouping. This process is accomplished through the development of in-depth effective frames, which are contextualized by Optimal Distinctiveness Theory and Perceived Deprivation Theory. These theories form the foundational approaches to develop supporting arguments to augment and support each phase of the framing process. This framing and contextualization process can be adapted for any media, be they traditional methods such as TV, Radio, or any print media. These conduits certainly will not go away in the foreseeable future and will still need to be leveraged by any element seeking influence. However, the place where this process and these techniques have their greatest impact is within the realm of social media and Web 2.0. LTC Rich Davenport,[135] of the US Army Command and General Staff college states: "Due to Web 2.0 platforms for communication, the digitization of all forms of communications through Web 2.0 platforms, and the exponential spread and use of smart phones linked through various networks, communication and information is becoming more decentralized." [136]This lack of centralized control means more

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[135] LTC Rich Davenport: US Army Psychological operations officer and Instructor at the US Army Command and General Staff College. LTC Davenport has written widely on implications of using Web 2.0 to support Special Operations.

[136] Richard L. Davenport, "Networked Mediated Influence 2.0" (Master's Thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2014), 5.

individuals, private organizations, and non-state actors are now in greater competition. This shift can best be explained by the concept of "many-to-many" communication where traditional consumers of information are now also producers of information, or "prosumers". These prosumers understand how to leverage platforms, content, and sheer speed in order to redefine the terrain of the cognitive battle space, through the use of the techniques discussed above. To achieve any effect in these new realities, the US PSYOP community must develop a working appreciation for Web 2.0 and emerging information communication technologies.

The many-to-many communication concept and its manifestation in the Internet means that for the first time media is capable of being a space for both conversation and groups. This new environment is only now truly coming into its own. In the words of Clay Shirky, "Something doesn't become socially interesting until it is no longer technologically interesting."[137] Web 2.0 and its associated platforms are just now arriving at this point. This is evidenced by ubiquitous use of Web 2.0 platforms and others forms of digitized communications by various groups to communicate, organize online, and then manifest quickly in physical space. With this emerging global common, disparate groups realize innovation and change can occur without a physical locality because Web 2.0 guarantees in some way, "we are all in this together." Due to this fact, governments have a hard time controlling the narrative. They are required to compete in environments that now consist of multiple narratives as opposed to the older, centralized system. Only

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[137] TED, *How Social Media Can Make History*, Performed by Clay Shirky, accessed 14 April 2015, http://www.ted.com/talks/clay_shirky_how_cellphones_twitter_facebook_can_make_history/transcript?language=en#t-224354.

through realizing that effects must be thought of in terms of dominant market share and not control, can we hope to understand and fully leverage this emerging societal shift.

<u>Recommendations</u>

There are three areas that the PSYOP community must address in order to continue to develop the nascent capability for competing in the Web 2.0 dominant environment and fully leverage the "transistor" revolution in military affairs. The three areas are education, training, and authorities.

The biggest obstacle for leveraging Web 2.0 platforms are the authorities. In April of 2014, the United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) held Silent Quest 15-01 at Fort Bragg. This exercise was designed to explore possible responses and action against an irredentist nation, with robust and vertical integrated elements of national power with the informational aspect of the DIME forming a leading component. During the three-day exercise, various scenarios involved cyber operations and more often cyber-enabling mechanisms to augment the effects of Special Operations activities. However, the most common point of concern that was voiced by LTG Cleveland, the Commanding General of USASOC, who asked if we have the permissions to execute these types of future operations using Web 2.0 or 3.0 platforms. The answer is "sort of." Current Title 10 authorities do authorize the internet as a means of product dissemination for PSYOP products, however these authorities place large scale restrictions on the abilities of U.S. Army and Special Operations Forces (SOF) using dynamic two-way engagement platform that exemplify Web 2.0 to shape, mitigate, sustain, or exploit events and effects within the information environment. One recommendation is to continue to evolve the conversations and working groups surrounding cyber-enabled operations

among the various Joint and Army staffs on how we can essentially power-down the permission to execute effectively. These conversations and working groups must focus on two key tasks prior to "powering down" permissions. The first of these is to establish the distinct difference between cyber-enabled operations and cyber operations, and secondly, address the concept of "narrative control" for the realities of the networked world of shareable content. With these parameters set as effective ground rules, we can more effectively guide the development of new authorities with a proper idea of the current Information environment and Web 2.0 platforms.

As new authorities and permissions are developed and approved, we must develop a force that is effectively trained and educated to maximize them. We must provide more of an introduction to Sociological and Psychological theories during the Psychological Operations Qualification Course. Commanders expect Officers and NCOs who can advise him effectively on how to leverage the information environment for effect. We must begin to provide our Soldiers an introduction to understanding the elements of that environment. Those elements are cognitive, physical, and informational.

The cognitive aspects of understanding should be centered around key Psychological and Sociological theories, such as Social Identity Theory, Symbolic Interactionist Theory, and Frame Theory, to name only a few. In the physical realm, we must provide an understanding of how networks, both human and machine, operate in both a physical and logical aspect. When we understand these aspects, we need to discuss other information related capabilities that can be used to affect them, and in turn make any Psychological Operations better. In the informational aspect, we must develop an

early understanding of the social nature of information and how platforms within Web 2.0 like Twitter and Facebook are a logical progression in a long process.

Approaching the information environment from a three-pronged perspective provides a possible method for future education and serves as an exemplar of an essential element for future training. We must expose and develop within our forces a comfort with multiple problem-solving frame works and approaches. Doctrine and Army training are structured by a functional rationalist paradigm. Lieutenant General Charles T. Cleveland stated in The Army Special Operation Forces (ARSOF) 2022 vision that "The ability to assess and understand a situation from multiple points of view and to intuitively adapt operations"[138] is essential to the continued success of ARSOF. This adaptability must see beyond the military adherence to a technically rational paradigm. "The 'technically rational' paradigm is one that permeates all of the U.S. Army's systems, processes, and intellectual approaches to situations. It asserts that all things in the universe can be under-stood by reductive observation and measurement leading to the discovery of universal principles."[139]

In order to provide more effective solutions to more complex problems we have to, as Lieutenant Colonel Martin[140] argues, "Begin educating our force beyond the

[138] U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School's Office of Strategic Communication, ARSOF 2022 [U.S. Army Special Operations Command], special edition of Special Warfare (Fort Bragg, NC: U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School's Office of Strategic Communication, 2013), accessed 5 March 2015, http://www.specialoperations.org/ARSOF2022_vFI- NAL%5B1%5D.pdf.

[139] Chris Paparone, *The Sociology of Military Science: Prospects for Postinstitutional Military Design* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013).

[140] LTC Grant Martin is a US Army Special Forces officer and School of Advanced Military Studies graduate. He has written extensively about military

MDMP process and exposing them to different operational art constructs and ways of

thinking." Some of these venues and training courses already exist, such as the

Information Environment Advanced Analysis Course and Unconventional Warfare

Operational Design Course. However, at the unit level, we must develop and invest time

into incorporating the new Operational Design concepts learned in training and seeking

out other elements such as the Cynefin framework[141] to expand the discussion and

learning process. Due to the complex nature and potential impact of SOF missions, we

must provide Commanders and planners at all levels exposure to a diverse set of

problem-solving methodologies to maximize creative and innovative solutions, especially

within the complexities of the information environment.

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operational and strategic thought. For more information see: Lt. Col. Grant M. Martin, "Deniers of "The Truth" Why an Agnostic Approach T Warfare Is Key," *Military Review* (January-February 2015): 42-52.

[141] Cynfien Framework: Is a conceptual problem solving framework designed by David A Snowden and Mary E Boone. The Cynfien framework helps leaders determine the prevailing operative context so that they can make appropriate choices with in various environments under constrained and uncertain conditions.
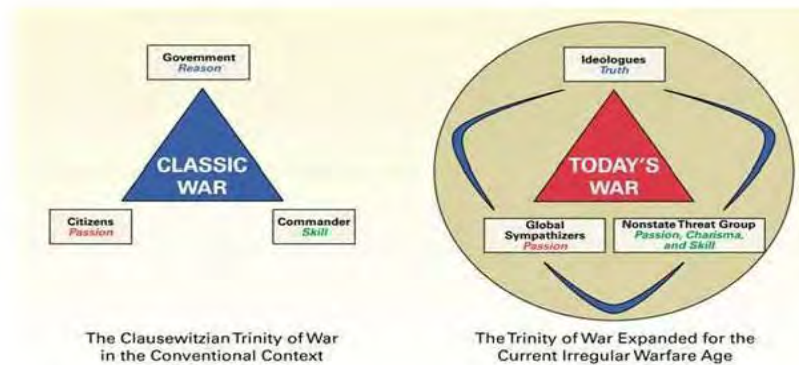
Figure 12. The New Triangle

Source: Real Instituto Elcano Royal Institute, accessed 2 May 2015, http://www.real
institutoelcano.org/wps/wcm/connect/995b3d8043f0742b859fb78f038e2cc0/1/image001.
jpg?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=995b3d8043f0742b859fb78f038e2cc0.
NOTE: Figure depicts a re-imagined version of the Clausewitzian triangle, modified for
today's battlefield.

This thesis only begins to discuss a possible approach for better understanding of

the information environment through rhetorical and discourse analysis. There are

multiple approaches that should be explored. They include but are not limited to

Pragmatist Storytelling Theory (PST) and Latent Semantic Analysis (LSA). LSA is a

statistical technique for analyzing the relationship between a set of documents and the

words that they contain. LSA assumes that words that are close in meaning will occur in

similar context. There is reason to assume that LSA can be useful in doing research

related to framing theory. PST defines storytelling as dynamically comprised of

narratives of the past, living stories of the immediate present and connective ante

narratives. Another possible lens is to use the rhetorical triangle Pathos, Logos and Ethos

coupled with the Clausewitzian triangle of reason, passion and chance to develop new filters. A possible representation could be something similar to the graphic above.

These types of approaches can provide insight into a possible taxonomy and approach to analyze dynamic many to many exchanges. A secondary area of focus should be symbolic convergence theory and its possible applications to modify the model presented here. Overall, a more holistic attempt to understand and apply psychological and sociological methods to understand social network analysis, argument formation and rhetoric will pay significant dividends in the future.

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